THE

CASTLE OF LINDENBERG;

OR THE

HISTORY

OF

RAYMOND AND AGNES;

WITH THE STORY OF THE

BLEEDING NUN:

and the Method by which the

WANDERING JEW

QUIETED THE NUN's TROUBLED SPIRIT.

By MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS, ESQ.
Member of Parliament for HINDON in WILTSHIRE;
And AUTHOR of the CASTLE SPECTRE, &c.

ORNAMENTED WITH TWO ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY S. FISHER,
AT HIS
CIRCULATING-LIBRARY,
No. 10,
ST JOHN's LANE, CLERKENWELL;
ALSO SOLD BY
LEE and HURST, No. 32, Paternoster Row.
1798.

TO THE

READER.

THOUGH the days of chivalry are over, and philosophy has elevated the mind of man nearer to the ſummit of perfection than it was in the feudal age of romance; yet a retroſpective portrait of thoſe times may be reckoned among the innocent intellectual pleaſures which reflection ſupplies to the human mind; for there exiſts with the firſt principle of our being, an ardent deſire after knowledge and facts, and every thing relating to the actions of our ſpecies. We find ourſelves intereſted in their tranſactions; and, as we know the preſent is not the age of perfection, we feel an anxious ſolicitude to be acquainted with the motives of our anceſtors, and the reaſons that induced them to adopt manners and cuſtoms, which, though now relinquiſhed, are, for their ſingularity, the admiration of the feeling mind.

The more a portrait approaches to the truth of nature, the more it is admired. Romantic fiction, though placed by proud philoſophy upon the humble level of legendary faith, will never fail to pleaſe, where nature guides the pencil of the delineator; and it ſhould be remembered that before this, fiction has been the nurſe, and more, even the foſter-mother of truth.

To inform, whilſt to amuſe; and to correct the irregular motions of the paſſions, to which the imperfection of our nature is ſubject, ſhould be the aim of every writer who ventures his efforts before the public. Whether this has been the conſtant object of the ingenious author of the MONK, is not our place to inquire; but it may be aſſerted with truth, that the following buſy and intereſting ſituations, deſcribed in the CASTLE of LINDENBERG, are in the firſt ſtyle of romantic writing, and in every ſhape would ſuffer by compariſon with the celebrated, but

more improbable, Caſtle of Otranto. *The intricacy of the intrigues, the ſuſpicious character of impoſture, and the barbarous tranſactions deſcribed herein, particularly the murder, muſt have a ſtrong effect upon the attention of the reader; and nothing of the kind can exceed the intereſt created by the nightly Apparition, which is very artfully increaſed to its greateſt height, in the introduction of the* Wandering Jew, *who lays the troubled ſpirit, and releaſes the inhabitants of the Caſtle from the ghoſt's quinquennial viſits, by the diſcovery of the bones of Beatrice, the Bleeding Nun, which are afterwards lain in hallowed ground.*

Situations which create horror, but yet corroborate the doctrine of the providential intereſt in the tranſactions of mankind, muſt have a ſalutary effect, as the contrary is too often the end and aim of modern noveliſts. Too much pains, therefore, cannot be taken to inculcate this truth; as the abſence of the idea of retributive juſtice, is always the cauſe of the enormities which daily occur in the world.

The concluſion of this intricate ſtory cannot eaſily be anticipated before it arrives; and in this particular, it correſponds exactly with Boſſu's *idea of perfection in Epic Romance.*

THE

HISTORY

OF

RAYMOND AND AGNES;

OR THE

BLEEDING NUN.

DON Lorenzo de Medina (accompanied by a friend), attended, through motives of curioſity, at the Church of the Capuchins, in Madrid, to hear an orator univerſally celebrated for his piety and learning.—Service being over, his friend parted from him; but Lorenzo ſtaid behind. After giving way to ſome melancholy ideas, he ſunk into a ſleep; from which he was awaked by the muſic of the monks who were celebrating their veſpers in the abbey-chapel. Leaving the church in order to viſit his ſiſter (whoſe convent was in the ſame ſtreet), he obſerved a man wrapped up in his cloak, cautiouſly examining whether he was perceived.—Lorenzo's curioſity being now excited, he concealed himſelf behind one of the columns; from whence he ſoon obſerved the ſtranger take a letter from under his cloak, and haſtily place it beneath a coloſſal ſtatue of St. Francis, and then retire to a diſtant part of the church. Thinking it a love-affair, he a ſecond time attempted to leave the church. Deſcending the ſteps into the ſtreet, a cavalier ruſhed againſt him with great violence: he put his hand to his ſword; but ſoon diſcovered it was his friend (Don Chriſtoval) who had lately parted from him. On learning from him that there was to be a proceſſion of nuns that evening for the purpoſe of confeſſion; the two cavaliers placed

themſelves behind the ſtatue of St. Francis. One of the nuns, in paying her reſpects to that Saint, dropped her roſary; and ſtooping to pick it up, removed the letter from beneath the image, and reſumed her rank in the proceſſion. As the nuns always unveil on entering a place of worſhip, Lorenzo, by the light flaſhing in her face, diſcovered it to be Agnes. Burning with rage for the inſult offered his family, he overtook the ſtranger before he left the church, and inſiſted on knowing who he was, and what were the contents of that letter.—The ſtranger denying his right to aſk ſuch a queſtion, Lorenzo drew his ſword; and exchanged ſeveral paſſes with the unknown, when Don Chriſtoval bade them remember the conſequence of ſhedding blood on conſecrated ground; and calling Lorenzo by his title, diſcovered to the other that his antagoniſt was the brother of Agnes. The ſtranger then avowing himſelf to be Don Raymond, Marquis de las Ciſternas, was upbraided by Lorenzo for carrying on a clandeſtine correſpondence with his ſiſter. Raymond aſſured him that the affections of Agnes had for a long time been his; but as that was not a fit place for explanation, requeſted Lorenzo to accompany him to his hotel; where he ſhould have a full relation of every circumſtance. The two noblemen immediately left the church, and haſtened to the Palace de las Ciſternas. Having arrived there, the Marquis immediately conducted him to his apartment, and began to expreſs his ſatisfaction at finding him at Madrid. Lorenzo interrupted him—

"Excuſe me, my lord," ſaid he with a diſtant air, "if I reply ſomewhat coldly to your expreſſions of regard. A ſiſter's honour is involved in this affair: till that is eſtabliſhed, and the purport of your correſpondence with Agnes cleared up, I cannot conſider you as my friend. I am anxious to hear the meaning of your conduct; and hope that you will not delay the promiſed explanation."

"Firſt give me your word, that you will liſten with patience and indulgence."

"I love my ſiſter too well to judge her harſhly; and, till this moment, I poſſeſſed no friend ſo dear to me as yourſelf. I will alſo confeſs, that your having it in your power to oblige me in a buſineſs which I have much at heart, makes me very anxious to find you ſtill deſerving my eſteem."

"Lorenzo, you tranſport me! No greater pleaſure can be given me, than an opportunity of ſerving the brother of Agnes."

"Convince me that I can accept your favours without diſhonour, and there is no man in the world to whom I am more willing to be obliged."

"Probably you have already heard your ſiſter mention the name of Alphonſo d'Alvarada?"

"Never. Though I feel for Agnes an affection truly fraternal, circumſtances have prevented us from being much together. While yet a child, ſhe was conſigned to the care of her aunt, who had married a German nobleman. At his caſtle ſhe remained till two years ſince, when ſhe returned to Spain, determined upon ſecluding herſelf from the world."

"Good God! Lorenzo, you knew of her intention, and yet ſtrove not to make her change it?"

"Marquis, you wrong me: the intelligence which I received at Naples ſhocked me extremely, and I haſtened my return to Madrid for the expreſs purpoſe of preventing the ſacrifice. The moment that I arrived, I flew to the convent of St. Clare, in which Agnes had choſen to perform her noviciate. I requeſted to ſee my ſiſter. Conceive my ſurpriſe, when ſhe ſent me a refuſal: ſhe declared poſitively that, apprehending my influence over her mind, ſhe would not truſt herſelf in my ſociety, till the day before that on which ſhe was to receive the veil. I ſupplicated the nuns; I inſiſted upon ſeeing Agnes; and heſitated not to avow my ſuſpicions, that her being kept from me was againſt her own inclinations. To free herſelf from the imputation of violence, the prioreſs brought me a few lines, written in my ſiſter's well-known hand, repeating the meſſage already delivered. All future

attempts to obtain a moment's converſation with her were as fruitleſs as the firſt. She was inflexible, and I was not permitted to ſee her till the day preceding that on which ſhe entered the cloiſter, never to quit it more. This interview took place in the preſence of our principal relations. It was for the firſt time ſince her childhood that I ſaw her, and the ſcene was moſt affecting: ſhe threw herſelf upon my boſom, kiſſed me, and wept bitterly. By every poſſible argument, by tears, by prayers, by kneeling, I ſtrove to make her abandon her intention. I repreſented to her all the hardſhips of a religious life; I painted to her imagination all the pleaſures which ſhe was going to quit; and beſought her to diſcloſe to me what occaſioned her diſguſt to the world. At this laſt queſtion ſhe turned pale, and her tears flowed yet faſter. She entreated me not to preſs her on that ſubject; that it ſufficed me to know that her reſolution was taken, and that a convent was the only place where ſhe could now hope for tranquillity. She perſevered in her deſign, and made her profeſſion. I viſited her frequently at the grate; and every moment that I paſſed with her made me feel more affliction at her loſs. I was ſhortly after obliged to quit Madrid; I returned but yeſterday evening, and, ſince then, have not had time to call at St. Clare's convent."

"Then, till I mentioned it, you never heard the name of Alphonſo d'Alvarada?"

"Pardon me: my aunt wrote me word, that an adventurer ſo called had found means to get introduced into the Caſtle of Lindenberg; that he had inſinuated himſelf into my ſiſter's good graces; and that ſhe had even conſented to elope with him. However, before the plan could be executed, the cavalier diſcovered, that the eſtates which he believed Agnes to poſſeſs in Hiſpaniola, in reality belonged to me. This intelligence made him change his intention; he diſappeared on the day that the elopement was to have taken place; and Agnes, in deſpair at his perfidy and meanneſs, had reſolved upon ſeclusion in a convent.

She added, that as this adventurer had given himſelf out to be a friend of mine, ſhe wiſhed to know whether I had any knowledge of him. I replied in the negative. I had then very little idea, that Alphonſo d'Alvarada and the Marquis de las Ciſternas were one and the ſame perſon: the deſcription given me of the firſt by no means tallied with what I knew of the latter."

"In this I eaſily recognize Donna Rodolpha's perfidious character. Every word of this account is ſtamped with marks of her malice, of her falſehood, of her talents for miſrepreſenting thoſe whom ſhe wiſhes to injure. Forgive me, Medina, for ſpeaking ſo freely of your relation. The miſchief which ſhe has done me authoriſes my reſentment; and when you have heard my ſtory, you will be convinced that my expreſſions have not been too ſevere."

He then began his narrative in the following manner:——

HISTORY OF DON RAYMOND,

MARQUIS DE LAS CISTERNAS.

LONG experience, my dear Lorenzo, has convinced me how generous is your nature: I waited not for your declaration of ignorance reſpecting your ſiſter's adventures, to ſuppoſe that they had been purpoſely concealed from you. Had they reached your knowledge, from what misfortunes ſhould both Agnes and myſelf have eſcaped! Fate had ordained it otherwiſe. You were on your travels when I firſt became acquainted with your ſiſter; and as our enemies took care to conceal from her your direction, it was impoſſible for her to implore by letter your protection and advice.

On leaving Salamanca, at which univerſity, as I have ſince heard, you remained a year after I quitted it, I immediately ſet out upon my travels. My father ſupplied me liberally with money; but he inſiſted upon my concealing my rank, and preſenting myſelf as no

more than a private gentleman. This command was iſſued by the counſels of his friend, the duke of Villa Hermoſa, a nobleman for whoſe abilities and knowledge of the world I have ever entertained the moſt profound veneration.

"Believe me," ſaid he, "my dear Raymond, you will hereafter feel the benefits of this temporary degradation. 'Tis true, that as the Conde de las Ciſternas you would have been received with open arms, and your youthful vanity might have felt gratified by the attentions ſhowered upon you from all ſides. At preſent, much will depend upon yourſelf; you have excellent recommendations, but it muſt be your own buſineſs to make them of uſe to you: you muſt lay yourſelf out to pleaſe; you muſt labour to gain the approbation of thoſe to whom you are preſented: they who would have courted the friendſhip of the Conde de las Ciſternas, will have no intereſt in finding out the merits, or bearing patiently with the faults, of Alphonſo d'Alvarada: conſequently, when you find yourſelf really liked, you may ſafely aſcribe it to your good qualities, not your rank; and the diſtinction ſhewn you will be infinitely more flattering. Beſides, your exalted birth would not permit your mixing with the lower claſſes of ſociety, which will now be in your power, and from which, in my opinion, you will derive conſiderable benefit. Do not confine yourſelf to the illuſtrious of thoſe countries through which you paſs. Examine the manners and cuſtoms of the multitude: enter into the cottages; and, by obſerving how the vaſſals of foreigners are treated, learn to diminiſh the burthens, and augment the comforts, of your own. According to my ideas of thoſe advantages which a youth deſtined to the poſſeſſion of power and wealth may reap from travel, he ſhould not conſider as the leaſt eſſential, the opportunity of mixing with the claſſes below him, and becoming an eye-witneſs of the ſufferings of the people."

Forgive me, Lorenzo, if I ſeem tedious in my narration: the cloſe connexion which now exiſts between

us, makes me anxious that you ſhould know every particular reſpecting me; and in my fear of omitting the leaſt circumſtance which may induce you to think favourably of your ſiſter and myſelf, I may poſſibly relate many which you may think unintereſting.

I followed the duke's advice; I was ſoon convinced of its wiſdom. I quitted Spain, calling myſelf by the aſſumed title of Don Alphonſo d'Alvarada, and attended by a ſingle domeſtic of approved fidelity. Paris was my firſt ſtation. For ſome time I was enchanted with it, as indeed muſt be every man who is young, rich, and fond of pleaſure. Yet, among all its gaieties, I felt that ſomething was wanting to my heart: I grew ſick of diſſipation: I diſcovered that the people among whom I lived, and whoſe exterior was ſo poliſhed and ſeducing, were at bottom frivolous, unfeeling, and inſincere. I turned from the inhabitants of Paris with diſguſt, and quitted that theatre of luxury without heaving one ſigh of regret.

I now bent my courſe towards Germany, intending to viſit moſt of the principal courts. Prior to this expedition, I meant to make ſome little ſtay at Straſbourg. On quitting my chaiſe at Luneville, to take ſome refreſhment, I obſerved a ſplendid equipage, attended by four domeſtics in rich liveries, waiting at the door of the Silver Lion. Soon after, as I looked out of the window, I ſaw a lady of noble preſence, followed by two female attendants, ſtep into the carriage, which drove off immediately.

I enquired of the hoſt who the lady was that had juſt departed.

"A German baroneſs, Monſieur, of great rank and fortune; ſhe has been upon a viſit to the Ducheſs of Longueville, as her ſervants informed me. She is going to Straſbourg, where ſhe will find her huſband, and then both return to their caſtle in Germany."

I reſumed my journey, intending to reach Straſbourg that night. My hopes, however, were fruſtrated by the breaking down of my chaiſe: the accident happened in the middle of a thick foreſt, and I was not a little embarraſſed as to the means of proceeding.

It was the depth of winter; the night was already closing round us; and Strasbourg, which was the nearest town, was still distant from us several leagues. It seemed to me that my only alternative to passing the night in the forest, was to take my servant's horse and ride on to Strasbourg; an undertaking at that season very far from agreeable. However, seeing no other resource, I was obliged to make up my mind to it: accordingly, I communicated my design to the postillion, telling him that I would send people to assist him as soon as I reached Strasbourg. I had not much confidence in his honesty; but Stephano being well armed, and the driver, to all appearance, considerably advanced in years, I imagined I ran no risk of losing my baggage.

Luckily, as I then thought, an opportunity presented itself of passing the night more agreeably than I expected. On mentioning my design of proceeding by myself to Strasbourg, the postillion shook his head in disapprobation.

"It is a long way," said he; "you will find it a difficult matter to arrive there without a guide: besides, Monsieur seems unaccustomed to the season's severity; and it is possible, that, unable to sustain the excessive cold——"

"What use is there to present me with all these objections?" said I, impatiently interrupting him: "I have no other resource; I run still greatest risk of perishing with cold by passing the night in the forest."

"Passing the night in the forest?" he replied. "Oh, by St. Denis! we are not in quite so bad a plight as that comes to yet. If I am not mistaken, we are scarcely five minutes walk from the cottage of my old friend Baptiste: he is a wood-cutter, and a very honest fellow. I doubt not but he will shelter you for the night with pleasure. In the mean time, I can take the saddle-horse, ride to Strasbourg, and be back with proper people to mend your carriage by break of day."

"And, in the name of God," said I, "how could you leave me so long in suspense? Why did you not

tell me of this cottage ſooner? What exceſſive ſtupidity!"

"I thought, that, perhaps, Monſieur would not deign to accept——"

"Abſurd! Come, come; ſay no more, but conduct us without delay to the woodman's cottage."

He obeyed, and we moved onwards: the horſes contrived, with ſome difficulty, to drag the ſhattered vehicle after us. My ſervant was become almoſt ſpeechleſs, and I began to feel the effects of the cold myſelf before we reached the wiſhed-for cottage. It was a ſmall but neat building: as we drew near it, I rejoiced at obſerving through the window the blaze of a comfortable fire. Our conductor knocked at the door: it was ſome time before any one anſwered; the people within ſeemed in doubt whether we ſhould be admitted.

"Come, come, friend Baptiſte!" cried the driver with impatience, "What are you about? Are you aſleep? Or will you refuſe a night's lodging to a Gentleman, whoſe chaiſe has juſt broken down in the foreſt?"

"Ah! is it you, honeſt Claude?" replied a man's voice from within: "Wait a moment, and the door ſhall be opened."

Soon after the bolts were drawn back; the door was unclofed, and a man preſented himſelf to us with a lamp in his hand: he gave the guide an hearty reception, and then addreſſed himſelf to me:

"Walk in, Monſieur; walk in, and welcome. Excuſe me for not admitting you at firſt; but there are ſo many rogues about this place that, ſaving your preſence, I ſuſpected you to be one."

Thus ſaying, he uſhered me into the room where I had obſerved the fire. I was immediately placed in an eaſy chair, which ſtood cloſe to the hearth. A female, whom I ſuppoſed to be the wife of my hoſt, roſe from her ſeat upon my entrance, and received me with a ſlight and diſtant reverence. She made no anſwer to my compliment, but, immediately re-ſeating herſelf, continued the work on which ſhe had been

employed. Her husband's manners were as friendly as hers were harsh and repulsive.

"I wish I could lodge you more conveniently, Monsieur," said he, "but we cannot boast of much spare room in this hovel. However, a chamber for yourself and another for your servant, I think, we can make shift to supply. You must content yourself with sorry fare; but to what we have, believe me, you are heartily welcome."——Then, turning to his wife—"Why, how you sit there, Marguerite, with as much tranquillity as if you had nothing better to do! Stir about, dame! stir about! Get some supper; look out some sheets. Here, here! throw some logs upon the fire, for the Gentleman seems perished with cold."

The wife threw her work hastily upon the table, and proceeded to execute his commands with every mark of unwillingness. Her countenance had displeased me on the first moment of my examining it: yet, upon the whole, her features were unquestionably handsome; but her skin was sallow, and her person thin and meagre: a louring gloom overspread her countenance, and it bore such visible marks of rancour and ill-will, as could not escape being noticed by the most inattentive observer: her every look and action expressed discontent and impatience; and the answers which she gave Baptiste, when he reproached her good-humouredly for her dissatisfied air, were tart, short, and cutting. In fine, I conceived at first sight equal disgust for her, and prepossession in favour of her husband, whose appearance was calculated to inspire esteem and confidence. His countenance was open, sincere, and friendly; his manners had all the peasant's honesty, unaccompanied by his rudeness: his cheeks were broad, full, and ruddy; and in the solidity of his person he seemed to offer an ample apology for the leanness of his wife's. From the wrinkles on his brow, I judged him to be turned of sixty; but he bore his years well, and seemed still hearty and strong. The wife could not be more than thirty, but in spirits and vivacity she was infinitely older than the husband.

However, in ſpite of her unwillingneſs, Marguerite began to prepare the ſupper, while the woodman converſed gaily on different ſubjects. The poſtillion, who had been furniſhed with a bottle of ſpirits, was now ready to ſet out for Straſbourg, and enquired whether I had any further commands.

"For Straſbourg?" interrupted Baptiſte; "you are not going thither to night?"

"I beg your pardon: if I do not fetch workmen to mend the chaiſe, how is Monſieur to proceed to-morrow?"

"That is true, as you ſay, I had forgotten the chaiſe. Well, but Claude, you may at leaſt eat your ſupper here. That can make you loſe very little time; and Monſieur looks too kind-hearted to ſend you out with an empty ſtomach on ſuch a bitter cold night as this is."

To this I readily aſſented, telling the poſtillion that my reaching Straſbourg the next day an hour or two later would be quite immaterial. He thanked me, and then leaving the cottage with Stephano, put up his horſes in the woodman's ſtable. Baptiſte followed them to the door, and looked out with anxiety.

"'Tis a ſharp biting wind," ſaid he: "I wonder what detains my boys ſo long! Monſieur, I ſhall ſhew you two of the fineſt lads that ever ſtepped in ſhoe of leather: the eldeſt is three-and-twenty, the ſecond a year younger: their equals for ſenſe, courage, and activity, are not to be found within fifty miles of Straſbourg. Would they were back again! I begin to feel uneaſy about them."

Marguerite was at this time employed in laying the cloth.

"And are you equally anxious for the return of your ſons?" ſaid I to her.

"Not I," ſhe replied peeviſhly; "they are no children of mine."

"Come, come, Marguerite!" ſaid the huſband, "do not be out of humour with the Gentleman for aſking a ſimple queſtion. Had you not looked ſo croſs, he would never have thought you old enough to have

a ſon of three-and-twenty; but you ſee how many years ill-temper adds to you!—Excuſe my wife's rudeneſs, Monſieur; a little thing puts her out; and ſhe is ſomewhat diſpleaſed at your not thinking her to be under thirty.—That is the truth; is it not, Marguerite? You know, Monſieur, that age is always a tickliſh ſubject with a woman. Come, come, Marguerite! clear up a little. If you have not ſons as old, you will ſome twenty years hence; and I hope that we ſhall live to ſee them juſt ſuch lads as Jacques and Robert."

Marguerite claſped her hands together paſſionately. "God forbid!" ſaid ſhe; "God forbid! If I thought it, I would ſtrangle them with my own hands."

She quitted the room haſtily, and went up ſtairs.

I could not help expreſſing to the woodman how much I pitied him for being chained for life to a partner of ſuch ill-humour.

"Ah, Lord! Monſieur, every one has his ſhare of grievances, and Marguerite has fallen to mine. Beſides, after all, ſhe is only croſs, and not malicious: the worſt is, that her affection for two children by a former huſband makes her play the ſtep-mother with my two ſons; ſhe cannot bear the ſight of them; and, by her good will, they would never ſet a foot within my door. But on this point I always ſtand firm, and never will conſent to abandon the poor lads to the world's mercy, as ſhe has often ſolicited me to do. In every thing elſe I let her have her own way; and truly ſhe manages a family rarely, that I muſt ſay for her."

We were converſing in this manner, when our diſcourſe was interrupted by a loud halloo, which rang through the foreſt.

"My ſons, I hope!" exclaimed the woodman, and ran to open the door.

The halloo was repeated. We now diſtinguiſhed the trampling of horſes; and, ſoon after, a carriage attended by ſeveral cavaliers ſtopped at the cottage-door. One of the horſemen enquired how far they

were ſtill from Straſbourg. As he addreſſed himſelf to me, I anſwered in the number of miles which Claude had told me; upon which a volley of curſes was vented againſt the drivers for having loſt their way. The perſons in the coach were now informed of the diſtance of Straſbourg; and alſo that the horſes were ſo fatigued as to be incapable of proceeding further. A Lady, who appeared to be the principal, expreſſed much chagrin at this intelligence; but as there was no remedy, one of the attendants aſked the woodman whether he could furniſh them with lodging for the night.

He ſeemed much embarraſſed, and replied in the negative; adding, that a Spaniſh Gentleman and his ſervant were already in poſſeſſion of the only ſpare apartments in his houſe. On hearing this, the gallantry of my nation would not permit me to retain thoſe accommodations of which a female was in want. I inſtantly ſignified to the woodman, that I transferred my right to the Lady: he made ſome objections, but I over-ruled them, and, haſtening to the carriage, opened the door, and aſſiſted the Lady to deſcend. I immediately recognized her for the ſame perſon whom I had ſeen at the inn at Luneville. I took an opportunity of aſking one of her attendants what was her name.

"The baroneſs Lindenberg," was the anſwer.

I could not but remark how different a reception our hoſt had given theſe new-comers and myſelf. His reluctance to admit them was viſibly expreſſed on his countenance; and with difficulty he prevailed on himſelf to tell the lady that ſhe was welcome. I conducted her into the houſe, and placed her in the arm-chair which I had juſt quitted. She thanked me very graciouſly, and made a thouſand apologies for putting me to an inconvenience. Suddenly the woodman's countenance cleared up.

"At laſt I have arranged it!" ſaid he, interrupting her excuſes. "I can lodge you and your ſuite, Madam, and you will not be under the neceſſity of mak-

ing this Gentleman ſuffer for his politeneſs. We have two ſpare chambers, one for the Lady, the other, Monſieur, for you: my wife ſhall give up hers to the two waiting-women: as for the men ſervants, they muſt content themſelves with paſſing the night in a large barn, which ſtands at a few yards diſtance from the houſe; there they ſhall have a blazing fire, and as good a ſupper as we can make ſhift to give them."

After ſeveral expreſſions of gratitude on the Lady's part, and oppoſition on mine to Marguerite's giving up her bed, this arrangement was agreed to. As the room was ſmall, the Baroneſs immediately diſmiſſed her male domeſtics. Baptiſte was on the point of conducting them to the barn which he had mentioned, when two young men appeared at the door of the cottage.

"Hell and furies!" exclaimed the firſt, ſtarting back, "Robert, the houſe is filled with ſtrangers!"

"Ha! there are my ſons!" cried our hoſt. "Why, Jacques! Robert! whither are you running, boys? There is room enough ſtill for you."

Upon this aſſurance the youths returned. The father preſented them to the Baroneſs and myſelf; after which he withdrew with our domeſtics, while, at the requeſt of the two waiting-women, Marguerite conducted them to the room deſigned for their miſtreſs.

The two new-comers were tall, ſtout, well-made young men, hard-featured, and very much ſun-burnt. They paid their compliments to us in few words, and acknowledged Claude, who now entered the room, as an old acquaintance. They then threw aſide their cloaks in which they were wrapped up, took off a leathern belt to which a large cutlaſs was ſuſpended, and each drawing a brace of piſtols from his girdle laid them upon a ſhelf.

"You travel well armed," ſaid I.

"True, Monſieur," replied Robert.—We left Straſbourg late this evening, and 'tis neceſſary to take precautions at paſſing through this foreſt after dark; it does not bear a good repute, I promiſe you."

"How!" ſaid the Baroneſs, "are there robbers hereabout?"

"So it is ſaid, Madam: for my own part, I have travelled through the wood at all hours, and never met with one of them."

Here Marguerite returned. Her ſtep-ſons drew her to the other end of the room, and whiſpered her for ſome minutes. By the looks which they caſt towards us at intervals, I conjectured them to be enquiring our buſineſs in the cottage.

In the mean while, the Baroneſs expreſſed her apprehenſions that her huſband would be ſuffering much anxiety upon her account She had intended to ſend on one of her ſervants to inform the Baron of her delay; but the account which the young men gave of the foreſt rendered this plan impracticable. Claude relieved her from her embarraſſment: he informed her, that he was under the neceſſity of reaching Straſbourg that night; and that, would ſhe truſt him with a letter, ſhe might depend upon its being ſafely delivered.

"And how comes it," ſaid I, "that you are under no apprehenſion of meeting theſe robbers?"

"Alas! Monſieur, a poor man with a large family muſt not loſe certain profit becauſe it is attended with a little danger; and, perhaps, my lord the Baron may give me a trifle for my pains: beſides, I have nothing to loſe except my life, and that will not be worth the robbers taking."

I thought his arguments bad, and adviſed his waiting till the morning; but, as the Baroneſs did not ſecond me, I was obliged to give up the point. The baroneſs Lindenberg, as I found afterwards, had long been accuſtomed to ſacrifice the intereſts of others to her own, and her wiſh to ſend Claude to Straſbourg blinded her to the undertaking. Accordingly, it was reſolved that he ſhould ſet out without delay. The Baroneſs wrote her letter to her huſband; and I ſent a few lines to my banker, appriſing him I ſhould not be at Straſbourg till the next day. Claude took our letters, and left the cottage.

The Lady declared herſelf much fatigued by her journey: beſides having come from ſome diſtance, the drivers had contrived to loſe their way in the foreſt. She now addreſſed herſelf to Marguerite, deſiring to be ſhewn to her chamber, and permitted to take half an hour's repoſe. One of the waiting-women was immediately ſummoned; ſhe appeared with a light, and the Baroneſs followed her up ſtairs. The cloth was ſpreading in the chamber where I was, and Marguerite ſoon gave me to underſtand that I was in her way. Her hints were too broad to be eaſily miſtaken. I therefore deſired one of the young men to conduct me to the chamber where I was to ſleep, and where I could remain till ſupper was ready.

"Which chamber is it, mother?" ſaid Robert.

"The one with green hangings," ſhe replied. "I have juſt been at the trouble of getting it ready, and have put freſh ſheets upon the bed; if the Gentleman chooſes to lollop and lounge upon it, he may make it again himſelf, for me."

"You are out of humour, mother; but that is no novelty. Have the goodneſs to follow me, Monſieur."

He opened the door, and advanced towards a narrow ſtair-caſe.

"You have got no light," ſaid Marguerite; "is it your own neck or the Gentleman's that you have a mind to break?"

She croſſed by me, and put a candle into Robert's hand; having received which, he began to aſcend the ſtair-caſe. Jacques was employed in laying the cloth, and his back was turned towards me. Marguerite ſeized the moment when we were unobſerved: ſhe caught my hand, and preſſed it ſtrongly.

"Look at the ſheets!" ſaid ſhe as ſhe paſſed me, and immediately reſumed her former occupation.

Startled by the abruptneſs of her action, I remained as if petrified. Robert's voice deſiring me to follow him recalled me to myſelf. I aſcended the ſtair-caſe. My conductor uſhered me into a chamber where an excellent wood fire was blazing upon the hearth. He placed the light upon the table, enquired whether I

had any further commands, and, on my replying in the negative, left me to myſelf. You may be certain, that the moment when I found myſelf alone, was that on which I complied with Marguerite's injunction. I took the candle haſtily, approached the bed, and turned down the coverture. What was my aſtoniſhment, my horror, at finding the ſheets crimſoned with blood!

At that moment a thouſand confuſed ideas paſſed before my imagination. The robbers who infeſted the wood, Marguerite's exclamation reſpecting her children, the arms and appearance of the two young men, and the various ancedotes which I had heard related reſpecting the ſecret correſpondence which frequently exiſts between banditti and poſtillions; all theſe circumſtances flaſhed upon my mind, and inſpired me with doubt and apprehenſion. I ruminated on the moſt probable means of aſcertaining the truth of my conjectures. Suddenly I was aware of ſome one below, pacing haſtily backwards and forwards. Every thing now appeared to me an object of ſuſpicion. With precaution I drew near the window, which, as the room had been long ſhut up, was left open in ſpite of the cold. I ventured to look out. The beams of the moon permitted me to diſtinguiſh a man, whom I had no difficulty to recognize for my hoſt. I watched his movements. He walked ſwiftly, then ſtopped and ſeemed to liſten: he ſtamped upon the ground, and beat his ſtomach with his arms, as if to guard himſelf from the inclemency of the ſeaſon: at the leaſt noiſe, if a voice was heard in the lower part of the houſe, if a bat flitted paſt him, or the wind rattled amidſt the leafleſs boughs, he ſtarted, and looked round with anxiety.

"Plague take him!" ſaid he at length with extreme impatience; "what can he be about?"

He ſpoke in a low voice; but as he was juſt below my window, I had no difficulty to diſtinguiſh his words.

I now heard the ſteps of one approaching. Baptiſte went towards the ſound; he joined a man, whom

his low ſtature, and the horn ſuſpended from his neck, declared to be no other than my faithful Claude, whom I had ſuppoſed to be already on his way to Straſbourg. Expecting their diſcourſe to throw ſome light upon my ſituation, I haſtened to put myſelf in a condition to hear it with ſafety. For this purpoſe I extinguiſhed the candle, which ſtood upon a table near the bed; the flame of the fire was not ſtrong enough to betray me, and I immediately reſumed my place at the window.

The objects of my curioſity had ſtationed themſelves directly under it. I ſuppoſe that, during my momentary abſence, the woodman had been blaming Claude for tardineſs, ſince when I returned to the window the latter was endeavouring to excuſe his fault.

"However," added he, "my diligence at preſent ſhall make up for my paſt delay."

"On that condition," anſwered Baptiſte, "I ſhall readily forgive you: but in truth, as you ſhare equally with us in our prizes, your own intereſt will make you uſe all poſſible diligence. 'Twould be a ſhame to let ſuch a noble booty eſcape us. You ſay that this Spaniard is rich?"

"His ſervant boaſted at the inn, that the effects in his chaiſe were worth above two thouſand piſtoles."

Oh! how I curſed Stephano's imprudent vanity.

"And I have been told," continued the poſtillion, "that this Baroneſs carries about her a caſket of jewels of immenſe value."

"May be ſo, but I had rather ſhe had ſtayed away. The Spaniard was a ſecure prey; the boys and myſelf could eaſily have maſtered him and his ſervant, and then the two thouſand piſtoles would have been ſhared between us four. Now we muſt let in the band for a ſhare, and perhaps the whole covey may eſcape us. Should our friends have betaken themſelves to their different poſts before you reach the cavern, all will be loſt. The Lady's attendants are too numerous for us to overpower them. Unleſs our aſſociates arrive in time, we muſt needs let theſe travellers ſet out to-morrow without damage or hurt."

"'Tis plaguy unlucky that my comrades who drove the coach ſhould be thoſe unacquainted with our confederacy! But never fear, friend Baptiſte: an hour will bring me to the cavern; it is now but ten o'clock, and by twelve you may expect the arrival of the band. By the bye, take care of your wife: you know how ſtrong is her repugnance to our mode of life, and ſhe may find means to give information to the Lady's ſervants of our deſign."

"Oh! I am ſecure of her ſilence; ſhe is too much afraid of me, and fond of her children, to dare to betray my ſecret. Beſides, Jacques and Robert keep a ſtrict eye over her, and ſhe is not permitted a foot out of the cottage. The ſervants are ſafely lodged in the barn. I ſhall endeavour to keep all quiet till the arrival of our friends. Were I aſſured of your finding them, the ſtrangers ſhould be diſpatched this inſtant; but as it is poſſible for you to miſs the banditti, I am fearful of being ſummoned by their domeſtics to produce them in the morning."

"And ſuppoſe either of the travellers ſhould diſcover your deſign?"

"Then we muſt poniard thoſe in our power, and take our chance about maſtering the reſt. However, to avoid running ſuch a riſk, haſten to the cavern; the banditti never leave it before eleven, and if you uſe diligence you may reach it in time to ſtop them."

"Tell Robert that I have taken his horſe; my own has broken his bridle, and eſcaped into the wood. What is the watch-word?"

"The reward of courage."

"'Tis ſufficient. I haſten to the cavern."

"And I to rejoin my gueſts, leſt my abſence ſhould create ſuſpicion. Farewell, and be diligent."

Theſe worthy aſſociates now ſeparated; the one bent his courſe towards the ſtable, while the other returned to the houſe.

You may judge what muſt have been my feelings during this converſation, of which I loſt not a ſingle ſyllable. I dared not truſt myſelf to my reflections, nor

did any means preſent theirſelves to eſcape the dangers which threatened me. Reſiſtance I knew to be vain; I was unarmed, and a ſingle man againſt three. However, I reſolved at leaſt to ſell my life as dearly as I could. Dreading leſt Baptiſte ſhould perceive my abſence, and ſuſpect me to have overheard the meſſage with which Claude was diſpatched, I haſtily re-lighted my candle and quitted the chamber. On deſcending, I found the table ſpread for ſix perſons. The Baroneſs ſat by the fire-ſide; Marguerite was employed in dreſſing a ſallad, and her ſtep-ſons were whiſpering together at the further end of the room. Baptiſte, having the round of the garden to make ere he could reach the cottage-door, was not yet arrived. I ſeated myſelf quietly oppoſite to the Baroneſs.

A glance upon Marguerite told her that her hint had not been thrown away upon me. How different did ſhe now appear to me! What before ſeemed gloom and ſullenneſs, I now found to be diſguſt at her aſſociates, and compaſſion for my danger. I looked up to her as to my only reſource; yet knowing her to be watched by her huſband with a ſuſpicious eye, I could place but little reliance on the exertions of her good will.

In ſpite of all my endeavours to conceal it, my agitation was but too viſibly expreſſed upon my countenance. I was pale, and both my words and actions were diſordered and embarraſſed. The young men obſerved this, and enquired the cauſe. I attributed it to exceſs of fatigue, and the violent effect produced on me by the ſeverity of the ſeaſon. Whether they believed me or not, I will not pretend to ſay; they at leaſt ceaſed to embarraſs me with their queſtions. I ſtrove to divert my attention from the perils which ſurrounded me, by converſing on different ſubjects with the Baroneſs. I talked of Germany, declaring my intention of viſiting it immediately: God knows, that I little thought at that moment of ever ſeeing it! She replied to me with great eaſe and politeneſs, profeſſed that the pleaſure of making my acquaintance amply compenſated for the delay in

her journey, and gave me a preſſing invitation to make ſome ſtay at the Caſtle of Lindenberg. As ſhe ſpoke thus, the youths exchanged a malicious ſmile, which declared that ſhe would be fortunate if ſhe ever reached that Caſtle herſelf. This action did not eſcape me; but I concealed the emotion which it excited in my breaſt. I continued to converſe with the Lady; but my diſcourſe was ſo frequently incoherent that, as ſhe has ſince informed me, ſhe began to doubt whether I was in my right ſenſes. The fact was, that while my converſation turned upon one ſubject, my thoughts were entirely occupied by another. I meditated upon the means of quitting the cottage, finding my way to the barn, and giving the domeſtics information of our hoſt's deſigns. I was ſoon convinced how impracticable was the attempt. Jacques and Robert watched my every movement with an attentive eye, and I was obliged to abandon the idea. All my hopes now reſted upon Claude's not finding the banditti. In that caſe, according to what I had overheard, we ſhould be permitted to depart unhurt.

I ſhuddered involuntarily as Baptiſte entered the room. He made many apologies for his long abſence, but "He had been detained by affairs impoſſible to be delayed." He then entreated permiſſion for his family to ſup at the ſame table with us, without which, reſpect would not authorize his taking ſuch a liberty. Oh! how in my heart I curſed the hypocrite! How I loathed his preſence, who was on the point of depriving me of an exiſtence, at that time infinitely dear! I had every reaſon to be ſatisfied with life; I had youth, wealth, rank, and education, and the faireſt proſpects preſented themſelves before me. I ſaw thoſe proſpects on the point of cloſing in the moſt horrible manner: yet was I obliged to diſſimulate, and to receive with a ſemblance of gratitude the falſe civilities of him who held the dagger to my boſom.

The permiſſion which our hoſt demanded was eaſily obtained. We ſeated ourſelves at the table. The Baroneſs and myſelf occupied one ſide; the ſons were

oppoſite to us, with their backs to the door. Baptiſte took his ſeat by the Baroneſs, at the upper end; and the place next to him was left for his wife. She ſoon entered the room, and placed before us a plain but comfortable peaſant's repaſt. Our hoſt thought it neceſſary to apologize for the poorneſs of the ſupper: "He had not been apprized of our coming; he could only offer us ſuch fare as had been intended for his own family."

"But," added he, "ſhould any accident detain my noble gueſts longer than they at preſent intend, I hope to give them a better treatment."

The villain! I well knew the accident to which he alluded. I ſhuddered at the treatment which he taught us to expect.

My companion in danger ſeemed entirely to have got rid of her chagrin at being delayed. She laughed, and converſed with the family with infinite gaiety. I ſtrove, but in vain, to follow her example. My ſpirits were evidently forced, and the conſtraint which I put upon myſelf eſcaped not Baptiſte's obſervation.

"Come, come, Monſieur, cheer up!" ſaid he; "you ſeem not quite recovered from your fatigue. To raiſe your ſpirits, what ſay you to a glaſs of excellent old wine which was left me by my father? God reſt his ſoul, he is in a better world! I ſeldom produce this wine; but as I am not honoured with ſuch gueſts every day, this is an occaſion which deſerves a bottle."

He then gave his wife a key, and inſtructed her where to find the wine of which he ſpoke. She ſeemed by no means pleaſed with the commiſſion; ſhe took the key with an embarraſſed air, and heſitated to quit the table.

"Did you hear me?" ſaid Baptiſte, in an angry tone.

Marguerite darted upon him a look of mingled anger and fear, and left the chamber. His eyes followed her ſuſpiciouſly till ſhe had cloſed the door.

She ſoon returned with a bottle ſealed with yellow wax. She placed it upon the table, and gave the key back to her huſband. I ſuſpected that this liquor was

not preſented to us without deſign, and I watched Marguerite's movements with inquietude. She was employed in rinſing ſome ſmall horn goblets. As ſhe placed them before Baptiſte, ſhe ſaw that my eye was fixed upon her; and at the moment when ſhe thought herſelf unobſerved by the banditti, ſhe motioned to me with her head not to taſte the liquor. She then reſumed her place.

In the mean while our hoſt had drawn the cork, and, filling two of the goblets, offered them to the Lady and myſelf. She at firſt made ſome objections; but the inſtances of Baptiſte were ſo urgent, that ſhe was obliged to comply. Fearing to excite ſuſpicion, I heſitated not to take the goblet preſented to me. By its ſmell and colour, I gueſſed it to be champagne; but ſome grains of powder floating upon the top convinced me that it was not unadulterated. However, I dared not to expreſs my repugnance to drinking it; I lifted it to my lips, and ſeemed to be ſwallowing it: ſuddenly ſtarting from my chair, I made the beſt of my way towards a vaſe of water at ſome diſtance, in which Marguerite had been rinſing the goblets. I pretended to ſpit out the wine with diſguſt, and took an opportunity, unperceived, of emptying the liquor into the vaſe.

The banditti ſeemed alarmed at my action. Jacques half roſe from his chair, put his hand into his boſom, and I diſcovered the haft of a dagger. I returned to my ſeat with tranquillity, and affected not to have obſerved their confuſion.

"You have not ſuited my taſte, honeſt friend," ſaid I, addreſſing myſelf to Baptiſte: "I never can drink champagne without its producing a violent illneſs. I ſwallowed a few mouthfuls ere I was aware of its quality, and fear that I ſhall ſuffer for my imprudence."

Baptiſte and Jacques exchanged looks of diſtruſt.

"Perhaps," ſaid Robert, "the ſmell may be diſagreeable to you?"

He quitted his chair, and removed the goblet. I

obſerved, that he examined whether it was nearly empty.

"He muſt have drank ſufficient," ſaid he to his brother in a low voice, while he re-ſeated himſelf.

Marguerite looked apprehenſive that I had taſted the liquor. A glance from my eye re-aſſured her.

I waited with anxiety for the effects which the beverage would produce upon the Lady. I doubted not but the grains which I had obſerved were poiſonous, and lamented that it had been impoſſible for me to warn her of the danger. But a few minutes had elapſed, before I perceived her eyes grow heavy; her head ſank upon her ſhoulder, and ſhe fell into a deep ſleep. I affected not to attend to this circumſtance, and continued my converſation with Baptiſte, with all the outward gaiety in my power to aſſume. But he no longer anſwered me without conſtraint. He eyed me with diſtruſt and aſtoniſhment, and I ſaw that the banditti were frequently whiſpering among themſelves. My ſituation became every moment more painful: I ſuſtained the character of confidence with a worſe grace then ever. Equally afraid of the arrival of their accomplices, and of their ſuſpecting my knowledge of their deſigns, I knew not how to diſſipate the diſtruſt which the banditti evidently entertained for me. In this new dilemma the friendly Marguerite again aſſiſted me. She paſſed behind the chairs of her ſtep-ſons, ſtopped for a moment oppoſite to me, cloſed her eyes, and reclined her head upon her ſhoulder. This hint immediately diſpelled my incertitude. It told me, that I ought to imitate the Baroneſs, and pretend that the liquor had taken its full effect upon me. I did ſo, and in a few minutes ſeemed perfectly overcome with ſlumber.

"So!" cried Baptiſte, as I fell back in my chair, "at laſt he ſleeps! I began to think that he had ſcented our deſign, and that we ſhould have been forced to diſpatch him at all events."

"And why not diſpatch him at all events?" enquired the ferocious Jacques: "Why leave him the poſſibility of betraying our ſecret? Marguerite, give me one

of my piſtols: a ſingle touch of the trigger will finiſh him at once."

"And ſuppoſing," rejoined the father, "ſuppoſing that our friends ſhould not arrive to-night, a pretty figure we ſhould make when the ſervants enquire for him in the morning. No, no, Jacques; we muſt wait for our aſſociates. If they join us, we are ſtrong enough to diſpatch the domeſtics as well as their maſters, and the booty is our own. If Claude does not find the troop, we muſt take patience, and ſuffer the prey to ſlip through our fingers. Ah! boys, boys, had you arrived but five minutes ſooner, the Spaniard would have been done for, and two thouſand piſtoles our own. But you are always out of the way when you are moſt wanted. You are the moſt unlucky rogues——"

"Well, well, father!" anſwered Jacques; "had you been of my mind, all would have been over by this time. You, Robert, Claude, and myſelf—why the ſtrangers were but double the number, and I warrant you we might have maſtered them. However, Claude is gone; 'tis too late to think of it now. We muſt wait patiently for the arrival of the gang; and if the travellers eſcape us to-night, we muſt take care to way-lay them to-morrow."

"True! true!" ſaid Baptiſte; "Marguerite, have you given the ſleeping-draught to the waiting-women?"

She replied in the affirmative.

"All then is ſafe. Come, come, boys; whatever falls out, we have no reaſon to complain of this adventure. We run no danger, may gain much, and can loſe nothing."

At this moment I heard a trampling of horſes. Oh! how dreadful was the ſound to my ears! A cold ſweat flowed down my forehead, and I felt all the terrors of impending death. I was by no means re-aſſured by hearing the compaſſionate Marguerite exclaim, in the accents of deſpair,

"Almighty God! they are loſt."

Luckily the woodman and his ſons were too much occupied by the arrival of their aſſociates to attend to me, or the violence of my agitation would have convinced them that my ſleep was feigned.

"Open! open!" exclaimed ſeveral voices on the outſide of the cottage.

"Yes! yes!" cried Baptiſte joyfully; they are our friends, ſure enough. Now then our booty is certain. Away! lads, away! Lead them to the barn; you know what is to be done there."

Robert haſtened to open the door of the cottage.

"But firſt," ſaid Jacques, taking up his arms, "firſt let me diſpatch theſe ſleepers."

"No, no, no!" replied his father: "Go you to the barn, where your preſence is wanted. Leave me to take care of theſe and the women above."

Jacques obeyed, and followed his brother. They ſeemed to converſe with the new-comers for a few minutes; after which I heard the robbers diſmount, and, as I conjectured, bend their courſe towards the barn.

"So! that is wiſely done!" muttered Baptiſte; "they have quitted their horſes, that they may fall upon the ſtrangers by ſurpriſe. Good! good! and now to buſineſs."

I heard him approach a ſmall cupboard which was fixed up in a diſtant part of the room, and unlock it. At this moment I felt myſelf ſhaken gently.

"Now! now!" whiſpered Marguerite.

I opened my eyes. Baptiſte ſtood with his back towards me. No one elſe was in the room, ſave Marguerite and the ſleeping Lady. The villain had taken a dagger from the cupboard, and ſeemed examining whether it was ſufficiently ſharp. I had neglected to furniſh myſelf with arms; but I perceived this to be my only chance of eſcaping, and reſolved not to loſe the opportunity. I ſprang from my ſeat, darted ſuddenly upon Baptiſte, and, claſping my hands round his throat, preſſed it ſo forcibly as to prevent his uttering a ſingle cry. You may remember, that I was remarkable at Salamanca for the power of my arm.

Raymond and Marguerite, kill Baptiste, and then make their escape, with the Baroness, from the Banditti. Page 31.

It now rendered me an eſſential ſervice. Surpriſed, terrified, and breathleſs, the villain was by no means an equal antagoniſt. I threw him upon the ground; I graſped him ſtill tighter; and while I fixed him without motion upon the floor, Marguerite wreſting the dagger from his hand, plunged it repeatedly in his heart till he expired.

No ſooner was this horrible but neceſſary act perpetrated, than Marguerite called on me to follow her.

"Flight is our only refuge," ſaid ſhe, "quick! quick! away!"

I heſitated not to obey her; but, unwilling to leave the Baroneſs a victim to the vengeance of the robbers, I raiſed her in my arms ſtill ſleeping, and haſtened after Marguerite. The horſes of the banditti were faſtened near the door. My conductreſs ſprang upon one of them. I followed her example, placed the Baroneſs before me, and ſpurred on my horſe. Our only hope was to reach Straſbourg, which was much nearer than the perfidious Claude had aſſured me. Marguerite was well acquainted with the road, and galloped on before me. We were obliged to paſs by the barn, where the robbers were ſlaughtering our domeſtics. The door was open: we diſtinguiſhed the ſhrieks of the dying, and imprecations of the murderers. What I felt at that moment language is unable to deſcribe.

Jacques heard the trampling of our horſes, as we ruſhed by the barn. He flew to the door with a burning torch in his hand, and eaſily recogniſed the fugitives.

"Betrayed! betrayed!" he ſhouted to his companions.

Inſtantly they left their bloody work, and haſtened to regain their horſes. We heard no more. I buried my ſpurs in the ſides of my courſer, and Marguerite goaded on hers with the poniard which had already rendered us ſuch good ſervice. We flew like lightning, and gained the open plains. Already was Straſbourg's ſteeple in ſight, when we heard the robbers purſuing us. Marguerite looked back, and diſtinguiſhed our

followers descending a small hill at no great distance: It was in vain that we urged on our horses: the noise approached nearer with every moment.

"We are lost!" she exclaimed; "the villains gain upon us!"

"On! on!" replied I; "I hear the trampling of horses coming from the town."

We redoubled our exertions, and were soon aware of a numerous band of cavaliers; who came towards us at full speed. They were on the point of passing us.

"Stay! stay!" shrieked Marguerite; "Save us! for God's sake, save us!"

The foremost, who seemed to act as guide, immediately reined in his steed.

"'Tis she! 'tis she!" exclaimed he, springing upon the ground: "Stop, my lord, stop! they are safe! 'tis my mother!"

At the same moment, Marguerite threw herself from her horse, clasped him in her arms, and covered him with kisses. The other cavaliers stopped at the exclamation.

"The Baroness Lindenberg!" cried another of the strangers eagerly: "Where is she? Is she not with you?"

He stopped on beholding her lying senseless in my arms. Hastily he caught her from me. The profound sleep in which she was plunged, made him at first tremble for her life; but the beating of her heart soon reassured him.

"God be thanked!" said he, "she has escaped unhurt."

I interrupted his joy by pointing out the brigands, who continued to approach No sooner had I mentioned t em, than the greatest part of the company, which appeared to be chiefly composed of soldiers; hastened forward to meet them. The villains staid not to receive their attack. Perceiving their danger, they turned the heads of their horses, and fled into the wood, whither they were followed by our preservers. In the mean while the stranger, whom I guessed to be the Baron Lindenberg, after thanking me for my care

of his Lady, propoſed our returning with all ſpeed to the town. The Baroneſs, on whom the effects of the opiate had not ceaſed to operate, was placed before him; Marguerite and her ſon remounted their horſes; the Baron's domeſtics followed, and we ſoon arrived at the inn, where he had taken his apartments.

This was at the Auſtrian Eagle, where my banker, whom before my quitting Paris I had appriſed of my intention to viſit Straſbourg, had prepared lodgings for me. I rejoiced at this circumſtance. It gave me an opportunity of cultivating the Baron's acquaintance, which I foreſaw would be of uſe to me in Germany. Immediately upon our arrival, the Lady was conveyed to bed. A phyſician was ſent for, who preſcribed a medicine likely to counteract the effects of the ſleepy potion; and after it had been poured down her throat, ſhe was committed to the care of the hoſteſs. The Baron then addreſſed himſelf to me, and entreated me to recount the particulars of this adventure. I complied with his requeſt inſtantaneouſly; for, in pain reſpecting Stephano's fate, whom I had been compelled to abandon to the cruelty of the banditti, I found it impoſſible for me to repoſe till I had ſome news of him. I received but too ſoon the intelligence that my truſty ſervant had periſhed. The ſoldiers who had purſued the brigands, returned while I was employed in relating my adventure to the Baron. By their account, I found that the robbers had been overtaken. Guilt and true courage are incompatible: they had thrown themſelves at the feet of their purſuers, had ſurrendered themſelves without ſtriking a blow, had diſcovered their ſecret retreat, made known their ſignals by which the reſt of the gang might be ſeized, and, in ſhort, had betrayed every mark of cowardice and baſeneſs. By this means the whole of the band, conſiſting of near ſixty perſons, had been made priſoners, bound, and conducted to Straſbourg. Some of the ſoldiers haſtened to the cottage, one of the banditti ſerving them as a guide. Their firſt viſit was to the fatal barn, where they were fortunate enough to find

two of the Baron's ſervants ſtill alive, though deſperately wounded. The reſt had expired beneath the ſwords of the robbers, and of theſe my unhappy Stephano was one.

Alarmed at our eſcape, the robbers, in their haſte to overtake us, had neglected to viſit the cottage; in conſequence, the ſoldiers found the two waiting-women unhurt, and buried in the ſame death-like ſlumber which had overpowered their miſtreſs. There was nobody elſe found in the cottage, except a child not above four years old, which the ſoldiers brought away with them. We were buſying ourſelves with conjectures reſpecting the birth of this little unfortunate, when Marguerite ruſhed into the room with the baby in her arms. She fell at the feet of the officer who was making us this report, and bleſſed him a thouſand times for the preſervation of her child.

When the firſt burſt of maternal tenderneſs was over, I beſought her to declare by what means ſhe had been united to a man whoſe principles ſeemed ſo totally diſcordant with her own. She bent her eyes downwards, and wiped a few tears from her cheek.

"Gentlemen," ſaid ſhe, after a ſilence of ſome minutes, "I would requeſt a favour of you. You have a right to know on whom you confer an obligation. I will not, therefore, ſtifle a confeſſion which covers me with ſhame; but permit me to compriſe it in as few words as poſſible.

"I was born in Straſbourg, of reſpectable parents; their name I muſt at preſent conceal. My father ſtill lives, and deſerves not to be involved in my infamy. If you grant my requeſt, you ſhall be informed of my family name. A villain made himſelf maſter of my affections, and to follow him I quitted my father's houſe. Yet, though my paſſions overpowered my virtue, I ſunk not into that degeneracy of vice but too commonly the lot of women who make the firſt falſe ſtep. I loved my ſeducer, dearly loved him! I was true to his bed: this baby, and the youth who warned you, my Lord Baron, of your Lady's danger, are the

pledges of our affection. Even at this moment I lament his loſs, though 'tis to him that I owe all the miſeries of my exiſtence.

"He was of noble birth, but he had ſquandered away his paternal inheritance. His relations conſidered him as a diſgrace to their name, and utterly diſcarded him. His exceſſes drew upon him the indignation of the police. He was obliged to fly from Straſbourg; and ſaw no other reſource from beggary than an union with the banditti who infeſted the neighbouring foreſt, and whoſe troop was chiefly compoſed of young men of family in the ſame predicament with himſelf. I was determined not to forſake him. I followed him to the cavern of the brigands, and ſhared with him the miſery inſeparable from a life of pillage. But though I was aware that our exiſtence was ſupported by plunder, I knew not all the horrible circumſtances attached to my lover's profeſſion: theſe he concealed from me with the utmoſt care. He was conſcious that my ſentiments were not ſufficiently depraved to look without horror upon aſſaſſination. He ſuppoſed, and with juſtice, that I ſhould fly with deteſtation from the embraces of a murderer. Eight years of poſſeſſion had not abated his love for me; and he cautiouſly removed from my knowledge every circumſtance which might lead me to ſuſpect the crimes in which he but too often participated. He ſucceeded perfectly. It was not till after my ſeducer's death that I diſcovered his hands to have been ſtained with the blood of innocence.

"One fatal night he was brought back to the cavern, covered with wounds: he received them in attacking an Engliſh traveller, whom his companions immediately ſacrificed to their reſentment. He had only time to entreat my pardon for all the ſorrows which he had cauſed me: he preſſed my hand to his lips, and expired. My grief was inexpreſſible. As ſoon as its violence abated, I reſolved to return to Straſbourg, to throw myſelf, with my two children, at my father's feet, and implore his forgiveneſs, though

I little hoped to obtain it. What was my conſternation when informed, that no one entruſted with the ſecret of their retreat was ever permitted to quit the troop of the banditti; that I muſt give up all hopes of ever rejoining ſociety, and conſent inſtantly to accept one of their band for my huſband! My prayers and remonſtrances were vain. They caſt lots to decide to whoſe poſſeſſion I ſhould fall. I became the property of the infamous Baptiſte A robber, who had once been a monk, pronounced over us a burleſque rather than a religious ceremony: I and my children were delivered into the hands of my new huſband, and he conveyed us immediately to his home.

"He aſſured me that he had long entertained for me the moſt ardent regard; but that friendſhip for my deceaſed lover had obliged him to ſtifle his deſires. He endeavoured to reconcile me to my fate, and for ſome time treated me with reſpect and gentleneſs. At length, finding that my averſion rather increaſed than diminiſhed, he obtained thoſe favours by violence which I perſiſted to refuſe him. No reſource remained for me but to bear my ſorrows with patience; I was conſcious that I deſerved them but too well. Flight was forbidden. My children were in the power of Baptiſte; and he had ſworn, that if I attempted to eſcape, their lives ſhould pay for it. I had had too many opportunities of witneſſing the barbarity of his nature, to doubt his fulfilling his oath to the very letter. Sad experience had convinced me of the horrors of my ſituation. My firſt lover had carefully concealed them from me; Baptiſte rather rejoiced in opening my eyes to the cruelties of his profeſſion, and ſtrove to familiariſe me with blood and ſlaughter.

"My nature was licentious and warm, but not cruel: my conduct had been imprudent, but my heart was not unprincipled. Judge, then, what I muſt have felt at being a continual witneſs of crimes the moſt horrible and revolting! Judge how I muſt have grieved at being united to a man, who received the unſuſpecting gueſt with an air of openneſs and hoſpitality, at the

very moment that he meditated his deſtruction! Chagrin and diſcontent preyed upon my conſtitution; the few charms beſtowed on me by nature withered away, and the dejection of my countenance denoted the ſuffering of my heart. I was tempted a thouſand times to put an end to my exiſtence; but the remembrance of my children held my hand. I trembled to leave my dear boys in my tyrant's power, and trembled yet more for their virtue than their lives. The ſecond was ſtill too young to benefit by my inſtructions; but in the heart of my eldeſt I laboured unceaſingly to plant thoſe principles which might enable him to avoid the crimes of his parents. He liſtened to me with docility, or rather with eagerneſs. Even at his early age, he ſhewed that he was not calculated for the ſociety of villains; and the only comfort which I enjoyed among my ſorrows, was to witneſs the dawning virtues of my Theodore.

"Such was my ſituation when the perfidy of Don Alphonſo's poſtillion conducted him to the cottage. His youth, air, and manners, intereſted me moſt forcibly in his behalf. The abſence of my huſband's ſons gave me an opportunity which I had long wiſhed to find, and I reſolved to riſque every thing to preſerve the ſtranger. The vigilance of Baptiſte prevented me from warning Don Alphonſo of his danger. I knew that my betraying the ſecret would be immediately puniſhed with death; and however embittered was my life by calamities, I wanted courage to ſacrifice it for the ſake of preſerving that of another perſon. My only hope reſted upon procuring ſuccour from Straſbourg. At this I reſolved to try; and ſhould an opportunity offer of warning Don Alphonſo of his danger unobſerved, I was determined to ſeize it with avidity. By Baptiſte's orders I went up ſtairs to make the ſtranger's bed: I ſpread upon it ſheets in which a traveller had been murdered but a few nights before, and which ſtill were ſtained with blood. I hoped that theſe marks would not eſcape the vigilance of our gueſt, and that he would collect from them the deſigns

of my perfidious huſband. Neither was this the only ſtep which I took to preſerve the ſtranger. Theodore was confined to his bed by illneſs. I ſtole into his room unobſerved by my tyrant, communicated to him my project, and he entered into it with eagerneſs. He roſe in ſpite of his malady, and dreſſed himſelf with all ſpeed. I faſtened one of the ſheets round his arms, and lowered him from the window. He flew to the ſtable, took Claude's horſe, and haſtened to Straſbourg. Had he been accoſted by the banditti, he was to have declared himſelf ſent upon a meſſage by Baptiſte, but fortunately he reached the town without meeting any obſtacle. Immediately upon his arrival at Straſbourg, he entreated aſſiſtance from the magiſtrate: his ſtory paſſed from mouth to mouth, and at length came to the knowledge of my Lord the Baron. Anxious for the ſafety of his Lady, who he knew would be upon the road that evening, it ſtruck him that ſhe might have fallen into the power of the robbers. He accompanied Theodore, who guided the ſoldiers towards the cottage, and arrived juſt in time to ſave us from falling once more into the hands of our enemies."

Here I interrupted Marguerite to enquire why the ſleepy potion had been preſented to me. She ſaid, that Baptiſte ſuppoſed me to have arms about me, and wiſhed to incapacitate me from making reſiſtance: it was a precaution which he always took, ſince, as the travellers had no hopes of eſcaping, deſpair would have incited them to ſell their lives dearly.

The Baron then deſired Marguerite to inform him what were her preſent plans. I joined him in declaring my readineſs to ſhew my gratitude to her for the preſervation of my life.

"Diſguſted with a world," ſhe replied, "in which I have met with nothing but misfortunes, my only wiſh is to retire into a convent. But firſt I muſt provide for my children. I find that my mother is no more—probably driven to an untimely grave by my deſertion. My father is ſtill living. He is not a hard man. Perhaps, Gentlemen, in ſpite of my ingratitude

and imprudence, your interceſſions may induce him to forgive me, and to take charge of his unfortunate grandſons. If you obtain this boon for me, you will repay my ſervices a thouſand-fold."

Both the Baron and myſelf aſſured Marguerite, that we would ſpare no pains to obtain her pardon: and that, even ſhould her father be inflexible, ſhe need be under no apprehenſions reſpecting the fate of her children. I engaged myſelf to provide for Theodore, and the Baron promiſed to take the youngeſt under his protection. The grateful mother thanked us with tears for what ſhe called generoſity, but which in fact was no more than a proper ſenſe of our obligations to her. She then left the room to put her little boy to bed, whom fatigue and ſleep had completely overpowered.

The Baroneſs, on recovering, and being informed from what dangers I had reſcued her, ſet no bounds to the expreſſions of her gratitude. She was joined ſo warmly by her huſband in preſſing me to accompany them to their caſtle in Bavaria, that I found it impoſſible to reſiſt their intreaties. During a week which we paſſed at Straſbourg, the intereſts of Marguerite were not forgotten. In our application to her father we ſucceeded as amply as we could wiſh. The good old man had loſt his wife. He had no children but this unfortunate daughter, of whom he had received no news for almoſt fourteen years. He was ſurrounded by diſtant relations, who waited with impatience for his deceaſe, in order to get poſſeſſion of his money. When therefore Marguerite appeared again ſo unexpectedly, he conſidered her as a gift from Heaven. He received her and her children with open arms, and inſiſted upon their eſtabliſhing themſelves in his houſe without delay. The diſappointed couſins were obliged to give place. The old man would not hear of his daughter's retiring into a convent. He ſaid, that ſhe was too neceſſary to his happineſs, and ſhe was eaſily perſuaded to relinquiſh her deſigns. But no perſuaſions could induce Theodore to give up the plan which

I had firſt marked out for him. He had attached himſelf to me moſt ſincerely during my ſtay at Straſbourg; and when I was on the point of leaving it, he beſought me with tears to take him into my ſervice. He ſet forth all his little talents in the moſt favourable colours, and tried to convince me that I ſhould find him of infinite uſe to me upon the road. I was unwilling to charge myſelf with a lad ſcarcely turned of thirteen, who I knew could only be a burthen to me: however, I could not reſiſt the entreaties of this affectionate youth, who in fact poſſeſſed a thouſand eſtimable qualities. With ſome difficulty he perſuaded his relations to let him follow me; and that permiſſion once obtained, he was dubbed with the title of my page. Having paſſed a week at Straſbourg, Theodore and myſelf ſet out for Bavaria, in company with the Baron and his Lady. Theſe latter, as well as myſelf, had forced Marguerite to accept ſeveral preſents of value, both for herſelf and her youngeſt ſon. On leaving her, I promiſed his mother faithfully, that I would reſtore Theodore to her within the year.

I have related this adventure at length, Lorenzo, that you might underſtand the means by which "the adventurer Alphonſo d'Alvarada got introduced into the Caſtle of Lindenberg." Judge from this ſpecimen, how much faith ſhould be given to your aunt's aſſertions.

My journey was uncommonly agreeable: I found the Baron a man of ſome ſenſe, but little knowledge of the world. He had paſſed a great part of his life without ſtirring beyond the precincts of his domains, and conſequently his manners were far from being the moſt poliſhed; but he was hearty, good-humoured, and friendly. His attention to me was all that I could wiſh, and I had every reaſon to be ſatisfied with his behaviour. His ruling paſſion was hunting, which he had brought himſelf to conſider as a ſerious occupation; and, when talking over ſome remarkable chace, he treated the ſubject with as much gravity as it had been a battle on which the fate of two kingdoms was

depending. I happened to be a tolerable ſportſman. Soon after my arrival at Lindenberg, I gave ſome proofs of my dexterity. The Baron immediately marked me down for a man of genius, and vowed to me an eternal friendſhip.

That friendſhip was become to me by no means indifferent. At the Caſtle of Lindenberg, I beheld, for the firſt time, your ſiſter, the lovely Agnes. For me, whoſe heart was unoccupied, and who grieved at the void, to ſee her and to love her were the ſame. I found in Agnes all that was requſite to ſecure my affection. She was then ſcarcely ſixteen; her perſon, light and elegant, was already formed; ſhe poſſeſſed ſeveral talents in perfection, particularly thoſe of muſic and drawing: her character was gay, open, and good-humoured; and the graceful ſimplicity of her dreſs and manners formed an advantageous contraſt to the art and ſtudied coquetry of the Pariſian Dames, whom I had juſt quitted. From the moment that I beheld her, I felt the moſt lively intereſt in her fate. I made many enquiries reſpecting her of the Baroneſs.

"She is my niece," replied that Lady; "you are ſtill ignorant, Don Alphonſo, that I am your countrywoman. I am ſiſter to the duke of Medina Celi. Agnes is the daughter of my ſecond brother, Don Gaſton: ſhe has been deſtined to the convent from her cradle, and will ſoon make her profeſſion at Madrid."

[Here Lorenzo interrupted the Marquis by an exclamation of ſurpriſe.

"Intended for the convent from her cradle!" ſaid he. "By heaven, this is the firſt word that I ever heard of ſuch a deſign."

"I believe it, my dear Lorenzo," anſwered Don Raymond; "but you muſt liſten to me with patience. You will not be leſs ſurpriſed, when I relate ſome particulars of your family ſtill unknown to you, and which I have learnt from the mouth of Agnes herſelf."

He then reſumed his narrative as follows:]

You cannot but be aware, that your parents were unfortunately ſlaves to the groſſeſt ſuperſtition; when

this foible was called into play, their every other ſentiment, their every other paſſion, yielded to its irreſiſtible ſtrength. While ſhe was big with Agnes, your mother was ſeized by a dangerous illneſs, and given over by her phyſicians. In this ſituation, Donna Ineſilla vowed, that if ſhe recovered from her malady, the child then living in her boſom, if a girl, ſhould be dedicated to St. Clare; if a boy, to St. Benedict. Her prayers were heard; ſhe got rid of her complaint; Agnes entered the world alive, and was immediately deſtined to the ſervice of St. Clare.

Don Gaſton readily chimed in with his lady's wiſhes: but knowing the ſentiments of the Duke, his brother, reſpecting a monaſtic life, it was determined that your ſiſter's deſtination ſhould be carefully concealed from him. The better to guard the ſecret, it was reſolved that Agnes ſhould accompany her aunt, Donna Rodolpha, into Germany, whither that Lady was on the point of following her new-married huſband, Baron Lindenberg. On her a rival at that eſtate, the young Agnes was put into a convent, ſituated but a few miles from the caſtle. The nuns, to whom her education was confided, performed their charge with exactitude: they made her a perfect miſtreſs of many accompliſhments, and ſtrove to infuſe into her mind a vaſte for the retirement and tranquil pleaſures of a convent. But a ſecret inſtinct made the young recluſe ſenſible that ſhe was not born for ſolitude. In all the freedom of youth and gaiety, ſhe ſcrupled not to treat as ridiculous many ceremonies which the nuns regarded with awe; and ſhe was never more happy than when her lively imagination inſpired her with ſome ſcheme to plague the ſtiff lady abbeſs, or the ugly ill-tempered old portereſs. She looked with diſguſt upon the proſpect before her: however, no alternative was offered to her, and ſhe ſubmitted to the decree of her parents, though not without ſecret repining.

That repugnance ſhe had not art enough to conceal long. Don Gaſton was informed of it. Alarmed, Lorenzo, leſt your affection for her ſhould oppoſe it-

ſelf to his projects, and leſt you ſhould poſitively object to your ſiſter's miſery, he reſolved to keep the whole affair from *your* knowledge as well as the Duke's, till the ſacrifice ſhould be conſummated. The ſeaſon of her taking the veil was fixed for the time when you ſhould be upon your travels: in the mean while no hint was dropped of Donna Ineſilla's fatal vow. Your ſiſter was never permitted to know your direction. All your letters were read before ſhe received them, and thoſe parts effaced which were likely to nouriſh her inclination for the world: her anſwers were dictated either by her aunt, or by Dame Cunegonda, her governeſs. Theſe particulars I learnt partly from Agnes, partly from the Baroneſs herſelf.

I immediately determined upon reſcuing this lovely girl from a fate ſo contrary to her inclinations, and ill-ſuited to her merit. I endeavoured to ingratiate myſelf into her favour: I boaſted of my friendſhip and intimacy with you. She liſtened to me with avidity; ſhe ſeemed to devour my words while I ſpoke in your praiſe, and her eyes thanked me for my affection to her brother. My conſtant and unremitted attention at length gained me her heart, and with difficulty I obliged her to confeſs that ſhe loved me. When, however, I propoſed her quitting the Caſtle of Lindenberg, ſhe rejected the idea in poſitive terms:—

"Be generous, Alphonſo," ſhe ſaid; "you poſſeſs my heart, but uſe not the gift ignobly. Employ not your aſcendancy over me in perſuading me to take a ſtep at which I ſhould hereafter have to bluſh. I am young and deſerted: my brother, my only friend, is ſeparated from me, and my other relations act with me as my enemies. Take pity on my unprotected ſituation. Inſtead of ſeducing me to an action which would cover me with ſhame, ſtrive rather to gain the affections of thoſe who govern me. The Baron eſteems you. My aunt, to others ever harſh, proud, and contemptuous, remembers that you reſcued her from the hands of murderers, and wears with you alone the appearance of kindneſs and benignity. Try then your

influence over my guardians. If they consent to our union, my hand is yours. From your account of my brother, I cannot doubt your obtaining his approbation: and when they find the impossibility of executing their design, I trust that my parents will excuse my disobedience, and expiate by some other sacrifice my mother's fatal vow."

From the first moment that I beheld Agnes, I had endeavoured to conciliate the favour of her relations. Authorised by the confession of her regard, I redoubled my exertions. My principal battery was directed against the Baroness: it was easy to discover, that her word was law in the castle: her husband paid her the most absolute submission, and considered her as a superior being. She was about forty: in her youth she had been a beauty; but her charms had been upon that large scale which can but ill sustain the shock of years: however, she still possessed some remains of them. Her understanding was strong and excellent when not obscured by prejudice, which unluckily was seldom the case. Her passions were violent: she spared no pains to gratify them, and pursued with unremitting vengeance those who opposed themselves to her wishes. The warmest of friends, the most inveterate of enemies—such was the Baroness Lindenberg.

I laboured incessantly to please her: unluckily I succeeded but too well. She seemed gratified by my attention, and treated me with a distinction accorded by her to no one else. One of my daily occupations was reading to her for several hours: those hours I should much rather have passed with Agnes; but as I was conscious that complaisance for her aunt would advance our union, I submitted with a good grace to the penance imposed upon me. Donna Rodolpha's library was principally composed of old Spanish romances: these were her favourite studies; and once a day one of these unmerciful volumes was regularly put into my hands. I read the wearisome adventures of "*Perceforest*,"—"*Tirante the White*,"—"*Palmerin of England*," and "*The Knight of the Sun*," till the book was on the

point of falling from my hands through *ennui*. However, the increasing pleasure which the Baroness seemed to take in my society, encouraged me to persevere; and latterly she shewed for me a partiality so marked, that Agnes advised me to seize the first opportunity of declaring our mutual passion to her aunt.

One evening I was alone with Donna Rodolpha, in her own apartment. As our readings generally treated of love, Agnes was never permitted to assist at them. I was just congratulating myself on having finished "*The Loves of Tristan and the Queen Iseult*——"

"Ah! the unfortunate!" cried the Baroness: "How say you, Segnor? Do you think it possible for man to feel an attachment so disinterested and sincere?"

"I cannot doubt it," replied I; "my own heart furnishes me with the certainty. Ah! Donna Rodolpha, might I but hope for your approbation of my love! might I but confess the name of my mistress, without incurring your resentment!"

She interrupted me.

"Suppose I were to spare you that confession? Suppose I were to acknowledge that the object of your desires is not unknown to me? Suppose I were to say, that she returns your affection, and laments not less sincerely than yourself the unhappy vows which separate her from you?"

"Ah! Donna Rodolpha!" I exclaimed, throwing myself upon my knees before her, and pressing her hand to my lips, "You have discovered my secret! What is your decision? Must I despair, or may I reckon upon your favour?"

She withdrew not the hand which I held; but she turned from me, and covered her face with the other.

"How can I refuse it you?" she replied: "Ah! Don Alphonso, I have long perceived to whom your attentions were directed, but till now I perceived not the impression which they made upon my heart. At length, I can no longer hide my weakness either from myself or from you. I yield to the violence of my passion, and own that I adore you! For three long

months I ſtifled my deſires; but growing ſtronger by reſiſtance, I ſubmit to their impetuoſity. Pride, fear, and honour, reſpect for myſelf, and my engagements to the Baron, all are vanquiſhed. I ſacrifice them to my love for you, and it ſtill ſeems to me that I pay too mean a price for your poſſeſſion."

She paused for an anſwer.—Judge, my Lorenzo, what muſt have been my confuſion at this diſcovery. I at once ſaw all the magnitude of this obſtacle, which I had myſelf raiſed to my happineſs. The Baroneſs had placed thoſe attentions to her own account, which I had merely paid her for the ſake of Agnes: and the ſtrength of her expreſſions, the look which accompanied them, and my knowledge of her revengeful diſpoſition, made me tremble for myſelf and my beloved. I was ſilent for ſome minutes. I knew not how to reply to her declaration: I could only reſolve to clear up the miſtake without delay, and for the preſent to conceal from her knowledge the name of my miſtreſs. No ſooner had ſhe avowed her paſſion, than the tranſports which before were evident in my features gave place to conſternation and conſtraint. I dropped her hand, and roſe from my knees. The change in my countenance did not eſcape her obſervation.

"What means this ſilence?" ſaid ſhe, in a trembling voice: "Where is that joy which you led me to expect?"

"Forgive me, Segnora," I anſwered, "if what neceſſity forces from me ſhould ſeem harſh and ungrateful. To encourage you in an error, which, however it may flatter myſelf, muſt prove to you the ſource of diſappointment, would make me appear criminal in every eye. Honour obliges me to inform you, that you have miſtaken for the ſolicitude of love what was only the attention of friendſhip. The latter ſentiment is that which I wiſhed to excite in your boſom: to entertain a warmer, reſpect for you forbids me, and gratitude for the Baron's generous treatment. Perhaps theſe reaſons would not be ſufficient to ſhield me from your attractions, were it not that my affections are al-

ready bestowed upon another. You have charms, Segnora, which might captivate the most insensible; no heart unoccupied could resist them. Happy is it for me, that mine is no longer in my possession, or I should have to reproach myself for ever with having violated the laws of hospitality. Recollect yourself, Noble Lady! recollect what is owed by you to honour, by me to the Baron, and replace by esteem and friendship those sentiments which I never can return."

The Baroness turned pale at this unexpected and positive declaration: she doubted whether she slept or woke. At length recovering from her surprise, consternation gave place to rage, and the blood rushed back into her cheeks with violence:—

"Villain!" she cried; "Monster of deceit! Thus is the avowal of my love received! Is it thus that——but, no, no! it cannot, it shall not be! Alphonso, behold me at your feet! Be witness of my despair! Look with pity on a woman who loves you with sincere affection! She who possesses your heart, how has she merited such a treasure? What sacrifice has she made to you? What raises her above Rodolpha?"

I endeavoured to lift her from her knees.

"For God's sake, Segnora, restrain these transports; they disgrace yourself and me. Your exclamations may be heard, and your secret divulged to your attendants. I see that my presence only irritates you: permit me to retire."

I prepared to quit the apartment: the Baroness caught me suddenly by the arm:—

"And who is this happy rival?" said she in a menacing tone; "I will know her name, and *when* I know it——! She is some one in my power; you entreated my favour, my protection! Let me but find her, let me but know who dares to rob me of your heart, and she shall suffer every torment which jealousy and disappointment can inflict. Who is she? Answer me this moment. Hope not to conceal her from my vengeance! Spies shall be set over you; every step, every look, shall be watched; your eyes will discover

my rival; I ſhall know her; and when ſhe is found, tremble, Alphonſo, for her and for yourſelf."

As ſhe uttered theſe laſt words, her fury mounted to ſuch a pitch as to ſtop her powers of reſpiration. She panted, groaned, and at length fainted away. As ſhe was falling I caught her in my arms, and placed her upon a ſopha. Then haſtening to the door, I ſummoned her women to her aſſiſtance; I committed her to their care, and ſeized the opportunity of eſcaping.

Agitated and confuſed beyond expreſſion, I bent my ſteps towards the garden. The benignity with which the Baroneſs had liſtened to me at firſt, raiſed my hopes to the higheſt pitch: I imagined her to have perceived my attachment for her niece, and to approve of it. Extreme was my diſappointment at underſtanding the true purport of her diſcourſe. I knew not what courſe to take: the ſuperſtition of the parents of Agnes, aided by her aunt's unfortunate paſſion, ſeemed to oppoſe ſuch obſtacles to our union as were almoſt inſurmountable.

As I paſſed by a low parlour, whoſe windows looked into the garden, through the door which ſtood half open, I obſerved Agnes ſeated at a table. She was occupied in drawing, and ſeveral unfiniſhed ſketches were ſcattered round her. I entered ſtill undetermined whether I ſhould acquaint her with the declaration of the Baroneſs.

"Oh! is it only you?" ſaid ſhe, raiſing her head: "You are no ſtranger, and I ſhall continue my occupation without ceremony. Take a chair, and ſeat yourſelf by me."

I obeyed, and placed myſelf near the table. Unconſcious what I was doing, and totally occupied by the ſcene which had juſt paſſed, I took up ſome of the drawings, and caſt my eyes over them. One of the ſubjects ſtruck me from its ſingularity. It repreſented the great hall of the Caſtle of Lindenberg. A door conducting to a narrow ſtair-caſe ſtood half open. In the fore-ground appeared a group of figures, placed in the moſt groteſque attitudes; terror was expreſſed

upon every countenance. Here was one upon his knees, with his eyes caſt up to heaven, and praying moſt devoutly; there, another was creeping away upon all fours. Some hid their faces in their cloaks, or the laps of their companions; ſome had concealed themſelves beneath a table, on which the remnants of a feaſt were viſible; while others, with gaping mouths and eyes wide-ſtretched, pointed to a figure ſuppoſed to have created this diſturbance. It repreſented a female of more than human ſtature, clothed in the habit of ſome religious order. Her face was veiled; on her arm hung a chaplet of beads; her dreſs was in ſeveral places ſtained with the blood which trickled from a wound upon her boſom. In one hand ſhe held a lamp, in the other a large knife, and ſhe ſeemed advancing towards the iron gates of the hall.

"What does this mean, Agnes?" ſaid I: "Is this ſome invention of your own?"

She caſt her eyes upon the drawing.

"Oh! no," ſhe replied; "'tis the invention of much wiſer heads than mine. But can you poſſibly have lived at Lindenberg for three whole months without hearing of the *Bleeding Nun?*"

"You are the firſt who ever mentioned the name to me. Pray, who may the Lady be?"

"That is more than I can pretend to tell you. All my knowledge of her hiſtory comes from an old tradition in this family, which has been handed down from father to ſon, and is firmly credited throughout the Baron's domains. Nay, the Baron believes it himſelf; and as for my aunt, who has a natural turn for the marvellous, ſhe would ſooner doubt the veracity of the Bible than of the *Bleeding Nun.* Shall I tell you this hiſtory?"

I anſwered, that ſhe would oblige me much by relating it: ſhe reſumed her drawing, and then proceeded as follows in a tone of burleſqued gravity:

"It is ſurpriſing that in all the chronicles of paſt times this remarkable perſonage is never once mentioned. Fain would I recount to you her life; but

unluckily till after her death ſhe was never known to have exiſted. Then firſt did ſhe think it neceſſary to make ſome noiſe in the world, and with that intention ſhe made bold to ſeize upon the Caſtle of Lindenberg. Having a good taſte, ſhe took up her abode in the beſt room of the houſe; and once eſtabliſhed there, ſhe began to amuſe herſelf by knocking about the tables and chairs in the middle of the night. Perhaps ſhe was a bad ſleeper; but this I have never been able to aſcertain. According to the tradition, this entertainment commenced about a century ago. It was accompanied with ſhrieking, howling, groaning, ſwearing, and many other agreeable noiſes of the ſame kind. But though one particular room was more eſpecially honoured with her viſits, ſhe did not entirely confine herſelf to it. She occaſionally ventured into the old galleries, paced up and down the ſpacious halls; or, ſometimes ſtopping at the doors of the chambers, ſhe wept and wailed there, to the univerſal terror of the inhabitants. In theſe nocturnal excurſions ſhe was ſeen by different people, who all deſcribe her appearance as you behold it here traced by the hand of her unworthy hiſtorian."

The ſingularity of this account inſenſibly engaged my attention.

"Did ſhe never ſpeak to thoſe who met her?" ſaid I.

"Not ſhe. The ſpecimens indeed which ſhe gave nightly of her talents for converſation, were by no means inviting. Sometimes the caſtle rung with oaths and execrations; a moment after ſhe repeated her *paternoſter:* now ſhe howled out the moſt horrible blaſphemies, and then chaunted *De profundis* as orderly as if ſtill in the choir. In ſhort, ſhe ſeemed a mighty capricious being: but whether ſhe prayed or curſed, whether ſhe was impious or devout, ſhe always contrived to terrify her auditors out of their ſenſes. The caſtle became ſcarcely habitable; and its lord was ſo frightened by theſe midnight revels, that one fine morning he was found dead in his bed. This ſucceſs ſeemed to pleaſe the Nun mightily, for now ſhe made more noiſe than

ever. But the next Baron proved too cunning for her. He made his appearance with a celebrated exorciſer in his hand, who feared not to ſhut himſelf up for a night in the haunted chamber. There it ſeems that he had a hard battle with the ghoſt before ſhe would promiſe to be quiet. She was obſtinate, but he was more ſo; and at length ſhe conſented to let the inhabitants of the caſtle take a good night's reſt. For ſome time after no news was heard of her. But at the end of five years the exorciſer died, and then the Nun ventured to peep abroad again. However, ſhe was now grown much more tractable and well-behaved. She walked about in ſilence, and never made her appearance above once in five years. This cuſtom, if you will believe the Baron, ſhe ſtill continues. He is fully perſuaded, that on the fifth of May of every fifth year, as ſoon as the clock ſtrikes one, the door of the haunted chamber opens. [Obſerve, that this room has been ſhut up for near a century.] Then out walks the ghoſtly nun with her lamp and dagger: ſhe deſcends the ſtair-caſe of the eaſtern tower, and croſſes the great hall. On that night, the porter always leaves the gates of the caſtle open, out of reſpect to the apparition: not that this is thought by any means neceſſary, ſince ſhe could eaſily whip through the key-hole if ſhe choſe it; but merely out of politeneſs, and to prevent her from making her exit in a way ſo derogatory to the dignity of her ghoſtſhip."

"And whither does ſhe go on quitting the caſtle?"

"To heaven, I hope; but if ſhe does, the place certainly is not to her taſte, for ſhe always returns after an hour's abſence. The Lady then retires to her chamber, and is quiet for another five years."

"And you believe this, Agnes?"

"How can you aſk ſuch a queſtion? No, no, Alphonſo! I have too much reaſon to lament ſuperſtition's influence, to be its victim myſelf. However, I muſt not avow my incredulity to the Baroneſs: ſhe entertains not a doubt of the truth of this hiſtory. As to Dame Cunegonda, my governeſs, ſhe proteſts that

fifteen years ago ſhe ſaw the ſpectre with her own eyes. She related to me one evening, how ſhe and ſeveral other domeſtics had been terrified while at ſupper by the appearance of the *Bleeding Nun*, as the ghoſt is called in the caſtle: 'tis from her account that I drew this ſketch, and you may be certain that Cunegonda was not omitted. There ſhe is! I ſhall never forget what a paſſion ſhe was in, and how ugly ſhe looked while ſhe ſcolded me for having made her picture ſo like herſelf!"

Here ſhe pointed to a burleſque figure of an old woman in an attitude of terror.

In ſpite of the melancholy which oppreſſed me, I could not help ſmiling at the playful imagination of Agnes: ſhe had perfectly preſerved Dame Cunegonda's reſemblance, but had ſo much exaggerated every fault, and rendered every feature ſo irreſiſtibly laughable, that I could eaſily conceive the duenna's anger.

"The figure is admirable, my dear Agnes! I knew not that you poſſeſſed ſuch talents for the ridiculous."

"Stay a moment," ſhe replied; "I will ſhew you a figure ſtill more ridiculous than Dame Cunegonda's. If it pleaſes you, you may diſpoſe of it as ſeems beſt to yourſelf."

She roſe, and went to a cabinet at ſome little diſtance. Unlocking a drawer, ſhe took out a ſmall caſe, which ſhe opened, and preſented to me.

"Do you know the reſemblance?" ſaid ſhe, ſmiling.

It was her own.

Tranſported at the gift, I preſſed the portrait to my lips with paſſion: I threw myſelf at her feet, and declared my gratitude in the warmeſt and moſt affectionate terms. She liſtened to me with complaiſance, and aſſured me that ſhe ſhared my ſentiments; when ſuddenly ſhe uttered a loud ſhriek, diſengaged the hand which I held, and flew from the room by a door which opened to the garden. Amazed at this abrupt departure, I roſe haſtily from my knees. I beheld with confuſion the Baroneſs ſtanding near me, glowing with jealouſy, and almoſt choaked with rage.

On recovering from her ſwoon, ſhe had tortured her imagination to diſcover her concealed rival. No one appeared to deſerve her ſuſpicions more than Agnes. She immediately haſtened to find her niece, tax her with encouraging my addreſſes, and aſſure herſelf whether her conjectures were well-grounded. Unfortunately ſhe had already ſeen enough to need no other confirmation. She arrived at the door of the room, at the preciſe moment when Agnes gave me her portrait. She heard me profeſs an everlaſting attachment to her rival, and ſaw me kneeling at her feet. She advanced to ſeparate us; we were too much occupied by each other to perceive her approach, and were not aware of it till Agnes beheld her ſtanding by my ſide.

Rage on the part of Donna Rodolpha, embarraſſment on mine, for ſome time kept us both ſilent. The Lady recovered herſelf firſt:—

"My ſuſpicions then were juſt," ſaid ſhe; "the coquetry of my niece has triumphed, and 'tis to her that I am ſacrificed. In one reſpect, however, I am fortunate; I ſhall not be the only one who laments a diſappointed paſſion. You, too, ſhall know what it is to love without hope! I daily expect orders for reſtoring Agnes to her parents. Immediately upon her arrival in Spain, ſhe will take the veil, and place an inſuperable barrier to your union. You may ſpare your ſupplication." She continued, perceiving me on the point of ſpeaking: "My reſolution is fixed and immoveable. Your miſtreſs ſhall remain a cloſe priſoner in her chamber, till ſhe exchanges this caſtle for the cloiſter. Solitude will, perhaps, recall her to a ſenſe of her duty: but, to prevent your oppoſing that wiſhed event, I muſt inform you, Don Alphonſo, that your preſence here is no longer agreeable either to the Baron or myſelf. It was not to talk nonſenſe to my niece, that your relations ſent you to Germany: your buſineſs was to travel, and I ſhould be ſorry to impede any longer ſo excellent a deſign. Farewell, Segnor; remember, that to-morrow morning we meet for the laſt time."

Having ſaid this, ſhe darted upon me a look of pride, contempt, and malice, and quitted the apartment. I alſo retired to mine, and conſumed the night in planning the means of reſcuing Agnes from the power of her tyrannical aunt.

After the poſitive declaration of its miſtreſs, it was impoſſible for me to make a longer ſtay at the Caſtle of Lindenberg. Accordingly, I, the next day, announced my immediate departure. The Baron declared that it gave him ſincere pain; and he expreſſed himſelf in my favour ſo warmly, that I endeavoured to win him over to my intereſt. Scarcely had I mentioned the name of Agnes when he ſtopped me ſhort, and ſaid, that it was totally out of his power to interfere in the buſineſs. I ſaw that it was in vain to argue; the Baroneſs governed her huſband with deſpotic ſway, and I eaſily perceived that ſhe had prejudiced him againſt the match. Agnes did not appear. I entreated permiſſion to take leave of her, but my prayer was rejected. I was obliged to depart without ſeeing her.

At quitting him, the Baron ſhook my hand affectionately, and aſſured me, that, as ſoon as his niece was gone, I might conſider his houſe as my own.

"Farewell, Don Alphonſo!" ſaid the Baroneſs, and ſtretched out her hand to me.

I took it, and offered to carry it to my lips. She prevented me. Her huſband was at the other end of the room, and out of hearing:—

"Take care of yourſelf," ſhe continued; "my love is become hatred, and my wounded pride ſhall not be unatoned. Go where you will, my vengeance ſhall follow you!"

She accompanied theſe words with a look ſufficient to make me tremble. I anſwered not, but haſtened to quit the caſtle.

As my chaiſe drove out of the court, I looked up to the windows of your ſiſter's chamber: nobody was to be ſeen there. I threw myſelf back deſpondent in my carriage. I was attended by no other ſervants than a Frenchman, whom I had hired at Straſbourg in ſte-

phano's room, and my little page, whom I before mentioned to you. The fidelity, intelligence, and good temper of Theodore, had already made him dear to me: but he now prepared to lay an obligation on me, which made me look upon him as a guardian genius. Scarcely had we proceeded half a mile from the caſtle, when he rode up to the chaiſe-door.

"Take courage, Segnor!" ſaid he in Spaniſh, which he had already learnt to ſpeak with fluency and correctneſs: "While you were with the Baron, I watched the moment when Dame Cunegonda was below ſtairs, and mounted into the chamber over that of Donna Agnes. I ſang, as loud as I could, a little German air, well known to her, hoping that ſhe would recollect my voice. I was not diſappointed, for I ſoon heard her window open. I haſtened to let down a ſtring with which I had provided myſelf. Upon hearing the caſement cloſe again, I drew up the ſtring, and, faſtened to it, I found this ſcrap of paper."

He then preſented me with a ſmall note, addreſſed to me. I opened it with impatience. It contained the following words, written in pencil:

"Conceal yourſelf for the next fortnight in ſome neighbouring village. My aunt will believe you to have quitted Lindenberg, and I ſhall be reſtored to liberty. I will be in the weſt pavilion at twelve on the night of the thirtieth. Fail not to be there, and we ſhall have an opportunity of concerting our future plans. Adieu.

"AGNES."

At peruſing theſe lines my tranſports exceeded all bounds; neither did I ſet any to the expreſſions of gratitude which I heaped upon Theodore. In fact, his addreſs and attention merited my warmeſt praiſe. You will readily believe that I had not entruſted him with my paſſion for Agnes; but the arch youth had too much diſcernment not to diſcover my ſecret, and too much diſcretion not to conceal his knowledge of it.

He obſerved in ſilence what was going on, nor ſtrove to make himſelf an agent in the buſineſs till my intereſts required his interference. I equally admired his judgment, his penetration, his addreſs, and his fidelity. This was not the firſt occaſion in which I had found him of infinite uſe, and I was every day more convinced of his quickneſs and capacity. During my ſhort ſtay at Straſbourg, he had applied himſelf diligently to learning the rudiments of Spaniſh. He continued to ſtudy it, and with ſo much ſucceſs, that he ſpoke it with the ſame facility as his native language. He paſſed the greateſt part of his time in reading. He had acquired much information for his age; and united the advantages of a lively countenance and prepoſſeſſing figure to an excellent underſtanding and the very beſt of hearts. He is now fifteen. He is ſtill in my ſervice; and when you ſee him, I am ſure that he will pleaſe you. But excuſe this digreſſion; I return to the ſubject which I quitted.

I obeyed the inſtructions of Agnes. I proceeded to Munich: there I left my chaiſe under the care of Lucas, my French ſervant, and then returned on horſeback to a ſmall village about four miles diſtant from the Caſtle of Lindenberg. Upon arriving there, a ſtory was related to the hoſt at whoſe inn I alighted, which prevented his wondering at my making ſo long a ſtay in his houſe. The old man, fortunately, was credulous and incurious: he believed all I ſaid, and ſought to know no more than what I thought proper to tell him. Nobody was with me but Theodore: both were diſguiſed; and as we kept ourſelves cloſe, we were not ſuſpected to be other than what we ſeemed. In this manner the fortnight paſſed away. During that time I had the pleaſing conviction that Agnes was once more at liberty. She paſſed through the village with Dame Cunegonda: ſhe ſeemed in good health and ſpirits, and talked to her companion without any appearance of conſtraint.

"Who are thoſe Ladies?" ſaid I to my hoſt as the carriage paſſed.

"Baron Lindenberg's niece, with her governeſs," he replied: ſhe goes regularly every Friday to the convent of St. Catharine, in which ſhe was brought up, and which is ſituated about a mile from hence."

You may be certain that I waited with impatience for the enſuing Friday. I again beheld my lovely miſtreſs. She caſt her eyes upon me as ſhe paſſed the inn-door. A bluſh which overſpread her cheek, told me that, in ſpite of my diſguiſe, I had been recogniſed. I bowed profoundly. She returned the compliment by a ſlight inclination of the head, as if made to one inferior, and looked another way till the carriage was out of ſight.

The long-expected, long-wiſhed-for night arrived. It was calm, and the moon was at the full. As ſoon as the clock ſtruck eleven, I haſtened to my appointment, determined not to be too late. Theodore had provided a ladder; I aſcended the garden-wall without difficulty. The page followed me, and drew the ladder after us. I poſted myſelf in the weſt pavilion, and waited impatiently for the approach of Agnes. Every breeze that whiſpered, every leaf that fell, I believed to be her foot-ſtep, and haſtened to meet her. Thus was I obliged to paſs a full hour, every minute of which appeared to me an age. The caſtle bell at length tolled twelve, and ſcarcely could I believe the night to be no farther advanced. Another quarter of an hour elapſed, and I heard the light foot of my miſtreſs approaching the pavilion with precaution. I flew to receive her, and conducted her to a ſeat. I threw myſelf at her feet, and was expreſſing my joy at ſeeing her, when ſhe thus interrupted me:—

"We have no time to loſe, Alphonſo: the moments are precious; for though no more a priſoner, Cunegonda watches my every ſtep. An expreſs is arrived from my father; I muſt depart immediately for Madrid, and 'tis with difficulty that I have obtained a week's delay. The ſuperſtition of my parents, ſupported by the repreſentations of my cruel aunt, leaves me no hope of ſoftening them to compaſſion. In this

dilemma, I have reſolved to commit myſelf to your honour. God grant that you may never give me cauſe to repent my reſolution! Flight is my only reſource from the horrors of a convent; and my imprudence muſt be excuſed by the urgency of the danger. Now liſten to the plan by which I hope to effect my eſcape:

"We are now at the thirtieth of April. On the fifth day from this the viſionary nun is expected to appear. In my laſt viſit to the convent I provided myſelf with a dreſs proper for the character. A friend whom I have left there, and to whom I made no ſcruple to confide my ſecret, readily conſented to ſupply me with a religious habit. Provide a carriage, and be with it at a little diſtance from the great gate of the caſtle. As ſoon as the clock ſtrikes "one," I ſhall quit my chamber, dreſſed in the ſame apparel as the ghoſt is ſuppoſed to wear. Whoever meets me will be too much terrified to oppoſe my eſcape: I ſhall eaſily reach the door, and throw myſelf under your protection. Thus far ſucceſs is certain: but, oh! Alphonſo, ſhould you deceive me! Should you deſpiſe my imprudence, and reward it with ingratitude, the world will not hold a being more wretched than myſelf! I feel all the dangers to which I ſhall be expoſed. I feel that I am giving you a right to treat me with levity: but I rely upon your love, upon your honour! The ſtep which I am on the point of taking will incenſe my relations againſt me. Should you deſert me; ſhould you betray the truſt repoſed in you, I ſhall have no friend to puniſh your inſult, or ſupport my cauſe. On yourſelf alone reſts all my hope; and if your own heart does not plead in my behalf, I am undone for ever!"

The tone in which ſhe pronounced theſe words was ſo touching, that, in ſpite of my joy at receiving her promiſe to follow me, I could not help being affected. I alſo repined in ſecret at not having taken the precaution to provide a carriage at the village; in which caſe, I might have carried off Agnes that very night. Such an attempt was now impracticable; neither carriage

nor horſes were to be procured nearer than Munich, which was diſtant from Lindenberg two good days journey. I was therefore obliged to chime in with her plan, which, in truth, ſeemed well arranged. Her diſguiſe would ſecure her from being ſtopped in quitting the caſtle, and would enable her to ſtep into the carriage at the very gate, without difficulty or loſing time.

Agnes reclined her head mournfully upon my ſhoulder, and, by the light of the moon, I ſaw tears flowing down her cheek. I ſtrove to diſſipate her melancholy, and encouraged her to look forward to the proſpect of happineſs. I proteſted in the moſt ſolemn terms that her virtue and innocence would be ſafe in my keeping; and that, till the church had made her my lawful wife, her honour ſhould be held by me as ſacred as a ſiſter's. I told her, that my firſt care ſhould be to find you out, Lorenzo, and reconcile you to our union; and I was continuing to ſpeak in the ſame ſtrain, when a noiſe without alarmed me. Suddenly the door of the pavilion was thrown open, and Cunegonda ſtood before us. She had heard Agnes ſteal out of her chamber, followed her into the garden, and perceived her entering the pavilion. Favoured by the trees which ſhaded it, and unperceived by Theodore, who waited at a little diſtance, ſhe had approached in ſilence, and overheard our whole converſation:—

"Admirable!" cried Cunegonda, in a voice ſhrill with paſſion, while Agnes uttered a loud ſhriek. "By St. Barbara, young Lady, you have an excellent invention! You muſt perſonate the Bleeding Nun, truly! What impiety! What incredulity! Marry, I have a good mind to let you purſue your plan When the real ghoſt met you, I warrant you would be in a pretty condition! Don Alphonſo, you ought to be aſhamed of yourſelf for ſeducing a young, ignorant creature to leave her family and friends. However, for this time, at leaſt, I ſhall mar your wicked deſigns. The Noble Lady ſhall be informed of the whole affair, and Agnes muſt defer playing the ſpectre till a better opportu-

nity. Farewell, Segnor.—Donna Agnes, let me have the honour of conducting your ghoſtſhip back to your apartment."

She approached the ſopha on which her trembling pupil was ſeated, took her by the hand, and prepared to lead her from the pavilion.

I detained her, and ſtrove by entreaties, ſoothing, promiſes, and flattery, to win her to my party; but, finding all that I could ſay was of no avail, I abandoned the vain attempt:—

"Your obſtinacy muſt be its own puniſhment," ſaid I; "but one reſource remains to ſave Agnes and myſelf, and I ſhall not heſitate to employ it."

Terrified at this menace, ſhe again endeavoured to quit the pavilion; but I ſeized her by the wriſt, and detained her forcibly. At the ſame moment Theodore, who had followed her into the room, cloſed the door, and prevented her eſcape. I took the veil of Agnes; I threw it round the duenna's head, who uttered ſuch piercing ſhrieks, that, in ſpite of our diſtance from the Caſtle, I dreaded their being heard. At length I ſucceeded in gagging her ſo completely, that ſhe could not produce a ſingle ſound. Theodore and myſelf, with ſome difficulty, next contrived to bind her hands and feet with our handkerchiefs; and I adviſed Agnes to regain her chamber with all diligence. I promiſed that no harm ſhould happen to Cunegonda; bade her remember that, on the fifth of May, I ſhould be in waiting at the great gate of the Caſtle, and took of her an affectionate farewell. Trembling and uneaſy, ſhe had ſcarce power enough to ſignify her conſent to my plans, and fled back to her apartment in diſorder and confuſion.

In the mean while, Theodore aſſiſted me in carrying off my antiquated prize. She was hoiſted over the wall, placed before me upon my horſe, like a portmanteau, and I galloped away with her from the Caſtle of Lindenberg. The unlucky duenna never had made a more diſagreeable journey in her life. She was jolted and ſhaken till ſhe was become little more than

an animated mummy; not to mention her fright, when we waded through a ſmall river, through which it was neceſſary to paſs in order to regain the village. Before we reached the inn, I had already determined how to diſpoſe of the troubleſome Cunegonda. We entered the ſtreet in which the inn ſtood; and while the page knocked, I waited at a little diſtance. The landlord opened the door with a lamp in his hand:—

"Give me the light," ſaid Theodore, "my maſter is coming."

He ſnatched the lamp haſtily, and purpoſely let it fall upon the ground. The landlord returned to the kitchen to re-light the lamp, leaving the door open. I profited by the obſcurity, ſprang from my horſe with Cunegonda in my arms, darted up ſtairs, reached my chamber unperceived, and, unlocking the door of a ſpacious cloſet, ſtowed her within it, and then turned the key. The landlord and Theodore ſoon after appeared with lights: the former expreſſed himſelf ſurpriſed at my returning ſo late, but aſked no impertinent queſtions. He ſoon quitted the room, and left me to exult in the ſucceſs of my undertaking.

I immediately paid a viſit to my priſoner. I ſtrove to perſuade her ſubmitting with patience to her temporary confinement. My attempt was unſucceſsful. Unable to ſpeak or move, ſhe expreſſed her fury by her looks; and, except at meals, I never dared to unbind her, or releaſe her from her gag. At ſuch times I ſtood over her with a drawn ſword, and proteſted that, if ſhe uttered a ſingle cry, I would plunge it in her boſom. As ſoon as ſhe had done eating, the gag was replaced. I was conſcious that this proceeding was cruel, and could only be juſtified by the urgency of circumſtances. As to Theodore, he had no ſcruples upon the ſubject. Cunegonda's captivity entertained him beyond meaſure. During his abode in the Caſtle, a continual warfare had been carried on between him and the duenna; and, now that he found his enemy ſo abſolutely in his power, he triumphed without mercy: he ſeemed to think of nothing but how to find

out new means of plaguing her. Sometimes he affected to pity her misfortune, then laughed at, abused, and mimicked her: he played her a thousand tricks, each more provoking than the other; and amused himself by telling her, that her elopement must have occasioned much surprise at the Baron's. This was in fact the case. No one, except Agnes, could imagine what was become of Dame Cunegonda. Every hole and corner was searched for her: the ponds were dragged, and the woods underwent a thorough examination. Still no Dame Cunegonda made her appearance. Agnes kept the secret, and I kept the duenna: the Baroness, therefore, remained in total ignorance respecting the old woman's fate, but suspected her to have perished by suicide. Thus passed away five days, during which I had prepared every thing necessary for my enterprise. On quitting Agnes, I had made it my first business to dispatch a peasant with a letter to Lucas, at Munich, ordering him to take care that a coach and four should arrive about ten o'clock on the fifth of May at the village of Rosenwald. He obeyed my instructions punctually; the equipage arrived at the time appointed. As the period of her Lady's elopement drew nearer, Cunegonda's rage increased. I verily believe, that spite and passion would have killed her, had I not luckily discovered her prepossession in favour of cherry-brandy. With this favourite liquor she was plentifully supplied, and, Theodore always remaining to guard her, the gag was occasionally removed. The liquor seemed to have a wonderful effect in softening the acrimony of her nature; and her confinement not admitting of any other amusement, she got drunk regularly once a-day, just by way of passing the time.

The fifth of May arrived, a period by me never to be forgotten! Before the clock struck twelve, I betook myself to the scene of action. Theodore followed me on horseback. I concealed the carriage in a spacious cavern of the hill on whose brow the Castle was situated. This Cavern was of considerable depth, and,

among the peaſants, was known by the name of Lindenberg Hole. The night was calm and beautiful: the moon-beams fell upon the antient towers of the Caſtle, and ſhed upon their ſummits a ſilver light. All was ſtill around me: nothing was to be heard except the night-breeze ſighing among the leaves, the diſtant barking of village-dogs, or the owl who had eſtabliſhed herſelf in a nook of the deſerted eaſtern turret. I heard her melancholy ſhriek, and looked upwards: ſhe ſat upon the ridge of a window, which I recognized to be that of the haunted room. This brought to my remembrance the ſtory of the Bleeding Nun, and I ſighed while I reflected on the influence of ſuperſtition, and the weakneſs of human reaſon. Suddenly I heard a faint chorus ſteal upon the ſilence of the night.

"What can occaſion that noiſe, Theodore?"

"A ſtranger of diſtinction," replied he, "paſſed through the village to-day in his way to the Caſtle: he is reported to be the father of Donna Agnes. Doubtleſs the Baron has given an entertainment to celebrate his arrival."

The Caſtle-bell announced the hour of midnight. This was the uſual ſignal for the family to retire to bed. Soon after I perceived lights in the Caſtle, moving backwards and forwards in different directions. I conjectured the company to be ſeparating. I could hear the heavy doors grate as they opened with difficulty; and as they cloſed again, the rotten caſements rattled in their frames. The chamber of Agnes was on the other ſide of the Caſtle. I trembled leſt ſhe ſhould have failed in obtaining the key of the haunted room. Through this it was neceſſary for her to paſs, in order to reach the narrow ſtair-caſe by which the ghoſt was ſuppoſed to deſcend into the great hall. Agitated by this apprehenſion, I kept my eyes conſtantly fixed upon the window, where I hoped to perceive the friendly glare of a lamp borne by Agnes. I now heard the maſſy gates unbarred. By the candle in his hand, I diſtinguiſhed old Conrad, the

porter. He ſet the portal doors wide open, and retired. The lights in the Caſtle gradually diſappeared, and at length the whole building was wrapt in darkneſs.

While I ſat upon a broken ridge of the hill, the ſtillneſs of the ſcene inſpired me with melancholy ideas not altogether unpleaſing. The Caſtle, which ſtood full in my ſight, formed an object equally awful and pictureſque. Its ponderous walls, tinged by the moon with ſolemn brightneſs; its old and partly ruined towers, lifting themſelves into the clouds, and ſeeming to frown on the plains around them; its lofty battlements, overgrown with ivy; and folding gates, expanding in honour of the viſionary inhabitant, made me ſenſible of a ſad and reverential horror. Yet did not theſe ſenſations occupy me ſo fully as to prevent me from witneſſing with impatience the ſlow progreſs of time. I approached the Caſtle, and ventured to walk round it. A few rays of light ſtill glimmered in the chamber of Agnes. I obſerved them with joy. I was ſtill gazing upon them, when I perceived a figure draw near the window, and the curtain was carefully cloſed to conceal the lamp which burned there. Convinced by this obſervation that Agnes had not abandoned our plan, I returned with a light heart to my former ſtation.

The half-hour ſtruck! The three-quarters ſtruck! My boſom beat high with hope and expectation. At length, the wiſhed-for ſound was heard. The bell tolled "one," and the manſion echoed with the noiſe loud and ſolemn. I looked up to the caſement of the haunted chamber. Scarcely had five minutes elapſed when the expected light appeared. I was now cloſe to the tower. The window was not ſo far from the ground, but that I fancied I perceived a female figure with a lamp in her hand moving ſlowly along the apartment. The light ſoon faded away, and all was again dark and gloomy.

Occaſional gleams of brightneſs darted from the ſtair-caſe windows as the lovely ghoſt paſſed by them.

I traced the light through the hall: it reached the portal, and at length I beheld Agnes pass through the folding gates. She was habited exactly as she had described the spectre; a chaplet of beads hung upon her arm; her head was enveloped in a long white veil; her nun's dress was stained with blood; and she had taken care to provide herself with a lamp and dagger. She advanced towards the spot where I stood. I flew to meet her, and clasped her in my arms:—

"Agnes!" said I, while I pressed her to my bosom;

"Agnes! Agnes! thou art mine!
Agnes! Agnes! I am thine!
In my veins while blood shall roll,
Thou art mine!
I am thine!
Thine my body! thine my soul!"

Terrified and breathless, she was unable to speak. She dropped her lamp and dagger, and sunk upon my bosom in silence. I raised her in my arms, and conveyed her to the carriage. Theodore remained behind in order to release Dame Cunegonda. I also charged him with a letter to the Baroness, explaining the whole affair, and entreating her good offices in reconciling Don Gaston to my union with his daughter. I discovered to her my real name. I proved to her that my birth and expectations justified my pretending to her niece; and assured her, though it was out of my power to return her love, that I would strive unceasingly to obtain her esteem and friendship.

I stepped into the carriage, where Agnes was already seated. Theodore closed the door, and the postillions drove away. At first I was delighted with the rapidity of our progress; but as soon as we were in no danger of pursuit, I called to the drivers, and bade them moderate their pace. They strove in vain to obey me; the horses refused to answer the rein, and continued to rush on with astonishing swiftness. The postillions redoubled their efforts to stop them; but, by kicking and plunging, the beasts soon released themselves from this restraint. Uttering a loud shriek,

the drivers were hurled upon the ground. Immediately thick clouds obſcured the ſky: the winds howled around us, the lightning flaſhed, and the thunder roared tremendouſly. Never did I behold ſo frightful a tempeſt! Terrified by the jar of contending elements, the horſes ſeemed every moment to increaſe their ſpeed. Nothing could interrupt their career; they dragged the carriage through hedges and ditches, daſhed down the moſt dangerous precipices, and ſeemed to vie in ſwiftneſs with the rapidity of the winds.

All this while, my companion lay motionleſs in my arms. Truly alarmed by the magnitude of the danger, I was in vain attempting to recall her to her ſenſes, when a loud craſh announced that a ſtop was put to our progreſs in the moſt diſagreeable manner. The carriage was ſhattered to pieces. In falling, I ſtruck my temple againſt a flint. The pain of the wound, the violence of the ſhock, and apprehenſion for the ſafety of Agnes, combined to overpower me ſo completely, that my ſenſes forſook me, and I lay without animation on the ground.

I probably remained for ſome time in this ſituation, ſince, when I opened my eyes, it was broad day-light. Several peaſants were ſtanding round me, and ſeemed diſputing whether my recovery was poſſible. I ſpoke German tolerably well. As ſoon as I could utter an articulate ſound, I enquired after Agnes. What was my ſurpriſe and diſtreſs, when aſſured by the peaſants, that nobody had been ſeen, anſwering the deſcription which I gave of her! They told me, that in going to their daily labour they had been alarmed by obſerving the fragments of my carriage, and by hearing the groans of an horſe, the only one of the four which remained alive: the other three lay dead by my ſide. Nobody was near me when they came up, and much time had been loſt before they ſucceeded in recovering me. Uneaſy beyond expreſſion reſpecting the fate of my companion, I beſought the peaſants to diſperſe themſelves in ſearch of her. I deſcribed her dreſs,

and promiſed immenſe rewards to whoever brought me any intelligence. As for myſelf, it was impoſſible for me to join in the purſuit: I had broken two of my ribs in the fall; my arm being diſlocated hung uſeleſs by my ſide; and my left leg was ſhattered ſo terribly, that I never expected to recover its uſe.

The peaſants complied with my requeſt; all left me except four, who made a litter of boughs, and prepared to convey me to the neighbouring town. I enquired its name: it proved to be Ratiſbon, and I could ſcarcely perſuade myſelf that I had travelled to ſuch a diſtance in a ſingle night. I told the countrymen, that at one o'clock that morning I had paſſed through the village of Roſenwald. They ſhook their heads wiſtfully, and made ſigns to each other that I muſt certainly be delirious. I was conveyed to a decent inn, and immediately put to bed. A phyſician was ſent for, who ſet my arm with ſucceſs: he then examined my other hurts, and told me that I need be under no apprehenſion of the conſequences of any of them, but ordered me to keep myſelf quiet, and be prepared for a tedious and painful cure. I anſwered him, that if he hoped to keep me quiet, he muſt firſt endeavour to procure me ſome news of a Lady who had quitted Roſenwald in my company the night before, and had been with me at the moment when the coach broke down. He ſmiled, and only replied by adviſing me to make myſelf eaſy, for that all proper care ſhould be taken of me. As he quitted me, the hoſteſs met him at the door of the room:—

"The Gentleman is not quite in his right ſenſes," I heard him ſay to her in a low voice; "'tis the natural conſequence of his fall, but that will ſoon be over."

One after another the peaſants returned to the inn, and informed me that no traces had been diſcovered of my unfortunate miſtreſs. Uneaſineſs now became deſpair. I entreated them to renew their ſearch in the moſt urgent terms, doubling the promiſes which I had already made them. My wild and frantic manner con-

firmed the by-ſtanders in the idea of my being delirious. No ſigns of the Lady having appeared, they believed her to be a creature fabricated by my over-heated brain, and paid no attention to my entreaties. However, the hoſteſs aſſured me, that a freſh enquiry ſhould be made; but I found afterwards that her promiſe was only given to quiet me. No further ſteps were taken in the buſineſs.

Though my baggage was left at Munich under the care of my French ſervant, having prepared myſelf for a long journey, my purſe was amply furniſhed: beſides, my equipage proved me to be of diſtinction, and in conſequence all poſſible attention was paid me at the inn. The day paſſed away: ſtill no news arrived of Agnes. The anxiety of fear now gave place to deſpondency. I ceaſed to rave about her, and was plunged in the depth of melancholy reflections. Perceiving me to be ſilent and tranquil, my attendants believed my delirium to have abated, and that my malady had taken a favourable turn. According to the phyſician's order, I ſwallowed a compoſing medicine; and as ſoon as the night ſhut in, my attendants withdrew, and left me to repoſe.

That repoſe I wooed in vain. The agitation of my boſom chaſed away ſleep. Reſtleſs in my mind, in ſpite of the fatigue of my body, I continued to toſs about from ſide to ſide, till the clock in a neighbouring ſteeple ſtruck "one." As I liſtened to the mournful hollow ſound, and heard it die away in the wind, I felt a ſudden chillneſs ſpread itſelf over my body. I ſhuddered without knowing wherefore; cold dews poured down my forehead, and my hair ſtood briſtling with alarm. Suddenly I heard ſlow and heavy ſteps aſcending the ſtair-caſe. By an involuntary movement I ſtarted up in my bed, and drew back the curtain. A ſingle ruſh-light, which glimmered upon the hearth, ſhed a faint gleam through the apartment, which was hung with tapeſtry. The door was thrown open with violence. A figure entered, and drew near my bed with ſolemn meaſured ſteps. With trembling

apprehenſion I examined this midnight viſitor. God Almighty! it was the Bleeding Nun! It was my loſt companion! Her face was ſtill veiled, but ſhe no longer held her lamp and dagger. She lifted up her veil ſlowly. What a ſight preſented itſelf to my ſtartled eyes! I beheld before me an animated corſe. Her countenance was long and haggard; her cheek and lips were bloodleſs; the paleneſs of death was ſpread over her features; and her eye-balls, fixed ſtedfaſtly upon me, were luſtreleſs and hollow.

I gazed upon the ſpectre with horror too great to be deſcribed. My blood was frozen in my veins. I would have called for aid, but the ſound expired ere it could paſs my lips. My nerves were bound up in impotence, and I remained in the ſame attitude inanimate as a ſtatue.

The viſionary nun looked upon me for ſome minutes in ſilence: there was ſomething petrifying in her regard. At length, in a low ſepulchral voice, ſhe pronounced the following words:—

"Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!
Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!
In thy veins while blood ſhall roll,
I am thine!
Thou art mine!
Mine thy body! Mine thy ſoul!"

Breathleſs with fear, I liſtened while ſhe repeated my own expreſſions. The apparition ſeated herſelf oppoſite to me at the foot of the bed, and was ſilent. Her eyes were fixed earneſtly upon mine: they ſeemed endowed with the property of the rattle-ſnake's, for I ſtrove in vain to look off her. My eyes were faſcinated, and I had not the power of withdrawing them from the ſpectre's.

In this attitude ſhe remained for a whole long hour without ſpeaking or moving; nor was I able to do either. At length the clock ſtruck "two." The apparition roſe from her ſeat, and approached the ſide of the bed. She graſped with her icy fingers my hand,

which hung lifeleſs upon the coverture, and, preſſing her cold lips to mine, again repeated,

"Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!
"Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!" &c.—

She then dropped my hand, quitted the chamber with ſlow ſteps, and the door cloſed after her. Till that moment the faculties of my body had been all ſuſpended; thoſe of my mind had alone been waking. The charm now ceaſed to operate; the blood which had been frozen in my veins ruſhed back to my heart with violence; I uttered a deep groan, and ſunk lifeleſs upon my pillow.

The adjoining room was only ſeparated from mine by a thin partition; it was occupied by the hoſt and his wife: the former was roufed by my groan, and immediately haſtened to my chamber; the hoſteſs ſoon followed him. With ſome difficulty they ſucceeded in reſtoring me to my ſenſes, and immediately ſent for the phyſician, who arrived in all diligence. He declared my fever to be very much increaſed, and that, if I continued to ſuffer ſuch violent agitation, he would not take upon him to inſure my life. Some medicines which he gave me, in ſome degree tranquillized my ſpirits. I fell into a ſort of ſlumber towards daybreak, but fearful dreams prevented me from deriving any benefit from my repoſe. Agnes and the Bleeding Nun preſented themſelves by turns to my fancy, and combined to haraſs and torment me. I awoke fatigued and unrefreſhed. My fever ſeemed rather augmented than diminiſhed; the agitation of my mind impeded my fractured bones from knitting: I had frequent fainting fits, and during the whole day the phyſician judged it expedient not to quit me for two hours together.

The ſingularity of my adventure made me determine to conceal it from every one, ſince I could not expect that a circumſtance ſo ſtrange ſhould gain credit. I was very uneaſy about Agnes. I knew not

what she would think at not finding me at the rendezvous, and dreaded her entertaining suspicions of my fidelity. However, I depended upon Theodore's discretion, and trusted that my letter to the Baroness would convince her of the rectitude of my intention. These considerations somewhat lightened my inquietude upon her account; but the impression left upon my mind by my nocturnal visitor, grew stronger with every succeeding moment. The night drew near; I dreaded its arrival; yet I strove to persuade myself that the ghost would appear no more; and at all events I desired that a servant might sit up in my chamber.

The fatigue of my body, from not having slept on the former night, co-operating with the strong opiates administered to me in profusion, at length procured me that repose of which I was so much in need. I sunk into a profound and tranquil slumber, and had already slept for some hours, when the neighbouring clock roused me by striking "one." Its sound brought with it to my memory all the horrors of the night before. The same cold shivering seized me. I started up in my bed, and perceived the servant fast asleep in an arm-chair near me. I called him by his name: he made no answer. I shook him forcibly by the arm, and strove in vain to wake him: he was perfectly insensible to my efforts. I now heard the heavy steps ascending the stair-case; the door was thrown open, and again the Bleeding Nun stood before me. Once more my limbs were chained in second infancy: once more I heard those fatal words repeated,

"Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!
Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!" &c.—

The scene which had shocked me so sensibly on the former night, was again presented. The spectre again pressed her lips to mine, again touched me with her rotting fingers, and, as on her first appearance, quitted the chamber as soon as the clock told "two."

Every night was this repeated. Far from growing

accuſtomed to the ghoſt, every ſucceeding viſit inſpired me with greater horror. Her idea purſued me continually, and I became the prey of habitual melancholy. The conſtant agitation of my mind naturally retarded the re-eſtabliſhment of my health. Several months elapſed before I was able to quit my bed; and when, at length, I was moved to a ſopha, I was ſo faint, ſpiritleſs, and emaciated, that I could not croſs the room without aſſiſtance. The looks of my attendants ſufficiently denoted the little hope which they entertained of my recovery. The profound ſadneſs which oppreſſed me without remiſſion, made the phyſician conſider me to be an hypochondriac. The cauſe of my diſtreſs I carefully concealed in my own boſom, for I knew that no one could give me relief. The ghoſt was not even viſible to any eye but mine. I had frequently cauſed attendants to ſit up in my room; but the moment that the clock ſtruck "one," irreſiſtible ſlumber ſeized them, nor left them till the departure of the ghoſt.

You may be ſurpriſed that during this time I made no enquiries after your ſiſter. Theodore, who with difficulty had diſcovered my abode, had quieted my apprehenſions for her ſafety; at the ſame time he convinced me, that all attempts to releaſe her from captivity muſt be fruitleſs, till I ſhould be in a condition to return to Spain. The particulars of her adventure, which I ſhall now relate to you, were partly communicated to me by Theodore, and partly by Agnes herſelf.

On the fatal night when her elopement was to have taken place, accident had not permitted her to quit her chamber at the appointed time. At length ſhe ventured into the haunted room, deſcended the ſtaircaſe leading into the hall, found the gates open as ſhe expected, and left the Caſtle unobſerved. What was her ſurpriſe at not finding me ready to receive her! She examined the cavern, ranged through every alley of the neighbouring wood, and paſſed two full hours in this fruitleſs enquiry. She could diſcover no traces

either of me or of the carriage. Alarmed and diſappointed, her only reſource was to return to the Caſtle before the Baroneſs miſſed her; but here ſhe found herſelf in a freſh embarraſſment. The bell had already tolled "two," the ghoſtly hour was paſt, and the careful porter had locked the folding gates. After much irreſolution, ſhe ventured to knock ſoftly. Luckily for her, Conrad was ſtill awake: he heard the noiſe, and roſe, murmuring at being called up a ſecond time. No ſooner had he opened one of the doors, and beheld the ſuppoſed apparition waiting there for admittance, than he uttered a loud cry, and ſunk upon his knees. Agnes profited by his terror: ſhe glided by him, flew to her own apartment, and, having thrown off her ſpectre's trappings, retired to bed, endeavouring in vain to account for my diſappearing.

In the mean while, Theodore having ſeen my carriage drive off with the falſe Agnes, returned joyfully to the village. The next morning he releaſed Cunegonda from her confinement, and accompanied her to the Caſtle. There he found the Baron, his Lady, and Don Gaſton, diſputing together upon the porter's relation. All of them agreed in believing the exiſtence of ſpectres; but the latter contended, that for a ghoſt to knock for admittance was a proceeding till then unwitneſſed, and totally incompatible with the immaterial nature of a ſpirit. They were ſtill diſcuſſing the ſubject, when the page appeared with Cunegonda, and cleared up the myſtery. On hearing his depoſition, it was agreed unanimouſly, that the Agnes whom Theodore had ſeen ſtep into my carriage muſt have been the Bleeding Nun, and that the ghoſt who had terrified Conrad was no other than Don Gaſton's daughter.

The firſt ſurpriſe which this diſcovery occaſioned being over, the Baroneſs reſolved to make it of uſe in perſuading her niece to take the veil. Fearing leſt ſo advantageous an eſtabliſhment for his daughter ſhould induce Don Gaſton to renounce his reſolution, ſhe

ſuppreſſed my letter, and continued to repreſent me as a needy unknown adventurer. A childiſh vanity had led me to conceal my real name even from my miſtreſs. I wiſhed to be loved for myſelf, not for being the ſon and heir of the Marquis de las Ciſternas. The conſequence was, that my rank was known to no one in the Caſtle except the Baroneſs, and ſhe took good care to confine the knowledge to her own breaſt. Don Gaſton having approved his ſiſter's deſign, Agnes was ſummoned to appear before them. She was taxed with having meditated an elopement, obliged to make a full confeſſion, and was amazed at the gentleneſs with which it was received; but what was her affliction, when informed that the failure of her project muſt be attributed to me! Cunegonda, tutored by the Baroneſs, told her, that when I releaſed her I had deſired her to inform her lady that our connexion was at an end; that the whole affair was occaſioned by a falſe report; and that it by no means ſuited my circumſtances to marry a woman without fortune or expectations.

To this account my ſudden diſappearing gave but too great an air of probability. Theodore, who could have contradicted the ſtory, by Donna Rodolpha's order, was kept out of her ſight. What proved a ſtill greater confirmation of my being an impoſtor, was the arrival of a letter from yourſelf, declaring that you had no ſort of acquaintance with Alphonſo d'Alvarada. Theſe ſeeming proofs of my perfidy, aided by the artful inſinuations of her aunt, by Cunegonda's flattery, and her father's threats and anger, entirely conquered your ſiſter's repugnance to a convent. Incenſed at my behaviour, and diſguſted with the world in general, ſhe conſented to receive the veil. She paſſed another month at the Caſtle of Lindenberg, during which my non-appearance confirmed her in her reſolution, and then accompanied Don Gaſton into Spain. Theodore was now ſet at liberty. He haſtened to Munich, where I had promiſed to let him hear from me; but finding from Lucas that I never

arrived there, he purſued his ſearch with indefatigable perſeverance, and at length ſucceeded in rejoining me at Ratiſbon.

So much was I altered, that ſcarcely could he recollect my features: the diſtreſs viſible upon his, ſufficiently teſtified how lively was the intereſt which he felt for me. The ſociety of this amiable boy, whom I had always conſidered rather as a companion than a ſervant, was now my only comfort. His converſation was gay, yet ſenſible, and his obſervations ſhrewd and entertaining. He had picked up much more knowledge than is uſual at his age; but what rendered him moſt agreeable to me, was his having a delightful voice, and ſome ſkill in muſic. He had alſo acquired ſome taſte in poetry, and even ventured ſometimes to write verſes himſelf. He occaſionally compoſed little ballads in Spaniſh. His compoſitions were but indifferent, I muſt confeſs, yet they were pleaſing to me from their novelty; and hearing him ſing them to his guitar was the only amuſement which I was capable of receiving. Theodore perceived well enough that ſomething preyed upon my mind; but as I concealed the cauſe of my grief even from him, reſpect would not permit him to pry into my ſecrets.

One evening I was lying upon my ſopha, plunged in reflections very far from ageeeable. Theodore amuſed himſelf by obſerving from the window a battle between two poſtillions, who were quarrelling in the inn-yard:—

"Ha! ha!" cried he, ſuddenly, "yonder is the Great Mogul."

"Who?" ſaid I.

"Only a man who made me a ſtrange ſpeech at Munich."

"What was the purport of it?"

"Now you put me in mind of it, Segnor, it was a kind of meſſage to you, but truly it was not worth delivering. I believe the fellow to be mad, for my part. When I came to Munich in ſearch of you, I found him living at "the King of the Romans," and the

ſuppreſſed my letter, and continued to repreſent me as a needy unknown adventurer. A childiſh vanity had led me to conceal my real name even from my miſtreſs. I wiſhed to be loved for myſelf, not for being the ſon and heir of the Marquis de las Ciſternas. The conſequence was, that my rank was known to no one in the Caſtle except the Baroneſs, and ſhe took good care to confine the knowledge to her own breaſt. Don Gaſton having approved his ſiſter's deſign, Agnes was ſummoned to appear before them. She was taxed with having meditated an elopement, obliged to make a full confeſſion, and was amazed at the gentleneſs with which it was received; but what was her affliction, when informed that the failure of her project muſt be attributed to me! Cunegonda, tutored by the Baroneſs, told her, that when I releaſed her I had deſired her to inform her lady that our connexion was at an end; that the whole affair was occaſioned by a falſe report; and that it by no means ſuited my circumſtances to marry a woman without fortune or expectations.

To this account my ſudden diſappearing gave but too great an air of probability. Theodore, who could have contradicted the ſtory, by Donna Rodolpha's order, was kept out of her ſight. What proved a ſtill greater confirmation of my being an impoſtor, was the arrival of a letter from yourſelf, declaring that you had no ſort of acquaintance with Alphonſo d'Alvarada. Theſe ſeeming proofs of my perfidy, aided by the artful inſinuations of her aunt, by Cunegonda's flattery, and her father's threats and anger, entirely conquered your ſiſter's repugnance to a convent. Incenſed at my behaviour, and diſguſted with the world in general, ſhe conſented to receive the veil. She paſſed another month at the Caſtle of Lindenberg, during which my non-appearance confirmed her in her reſolution, and then accompanied Don Gaſton into Spain. Theodore was now ſet at liberty. He haſtened to Munich, where I had promiſed to let him hear from me; but finding from Lucas that I never

arrived there, he purſued his ſearch with indefatigable perſeverance, and at length ſucceeded in rejoining me at Ratiſbon.

So much was I altered, that ſcarcely could he recollect my features: the diſtreſs viſible upon his, ſufficiently teſtified how lively was the intereſt which he felt for me. The ſociety of this amiable boy, whom I had always conſidered rather as a companion than a ſervant, was now my only comfort. His converſation was gay, yet ſenſible, and his obſervations ſhrewd and entertaining. He had picked up much more knowledge than is uſual at his age; but what rendered him moſt agreeable to me, was his having a delightful voice, and ſome ſkill in muſic. He had alſo acquired ſome taſte in poetry, and even ventured ſometimes to write verſes himſelf. He occaſionally compoſed little ballads in Spaniſh. His compoſitions were but indifferent, I muſt confeſs, yet they were pleaſing to me from their novelty; and hearing him ſing them to his guitar was the only amuſement which I was capable of receiving. Theodore perceived well enough that ſomething preyed upon my mind; but as I concealed the cauſe of my grief even from him, reſpect would not permit him to pry into my ſecrets.

One evening I was lying upon my ſopha, plunged in reflections very far from ageeeable. Theodore amuſed himſelf by obſerving from the window a battle between two poſtillions, who were quarrelling in the inn-yard:—

"Ha! ha!" cried he, ſuddenly, "yonder is the Great Mogul."

"Who?" ſaid I.

"Only a man who made me a ſtrange ſpeech at Munich."

"What was the purport of it?"

"Now you put me in mind of it, Segnor, it was a kind of meſſage to you, but truly it was not worth delivering. I believe the fellow to be mad, for my part. When I came to Munich in ſearch of you, I found him living at "the King of the Romans," and the

hoſt gave me an odd account of him. By his accent he is ſuppoſed to be a foreigner, but of what country nobody can tell. He ſeemed to have no acquaintance in the town, ſpoke very ſeldom, and never was ſeen to ſmile. He had neither ſervants nor baggage; but his purſe ſeemed well furniſhed, and he did much good in the town. Some ſuppoſed him to be an Arabian aſtrologer, others to be a travelling mountebank; and many declared that he was Doctor Fauſtus, whom the devil had ſent back to Germany. The landlord, however, told me, that he had the beſt reaſons to believe him to be the Great Mogul incognito.—"

"But the ſtrange ſpeech, Theodore—"

"True, I had almoſt forgotten the ſpeech: indeed, for that matter, it would not have been a great loſs if I had forgotten it altogether. You are to know, Segnor, that while I was enquiring about you of the landlord, this ſtranger paſſed by. He ſtopped, and looked at me earneſtly—"Youth," ſaid he, in a ſolemn voice, "he whom you ſeek, has found that which he would fain loſe. My hand alone can dry up the blood. Bid your maſter wiſh for me when the clock ſtrikes "one."

"How!" cried I, ſtarting from my ſopha. [The words which Theodore had repeated, ſeemed to imply the ſtranger's knowledge of my ſecret] "Fly to him, my boy! Entreat him to grant me one moment's converſation."

Theodore was ſurpriſed at the vivacity of my manner: however, he aſked no queſtions, but haſtened to obey me. I waited his return impatiently. But a ſhort ſpace of time had elapſed, when he again appeared, and uſhered the expected gueſt into my chamber. He was a man of majeſtic preſence; his countenance was ſtrongly marked, and his eyes were large, black, and ſparkling: yet there was a ſomething in his look, which, the moment that I ſaw him, inſpired me with a ſecret awe, not to ſay horror. He was dreſſed plainly, his hair was unpowered, and a band of black velvet, which encircled his forehead, ſpread

over his features an additional gloom. His countenance wore the marks of profound melancholy, his ſtep was ſlow, and his manner grave, ſtately, and ſolemn.

He ſaluted me with politeneſs; and having replied to the uſual compliments of introduction, he motioned to Theodore to quit the chamber. The page inſtantly withdrew.

"I know your buſineſs," ſaid he, without giving me time to ſpeak. "I have the power of releaſing you from your nightly viſitor; but this cannot be done before Sunday. On the hour when the ſabbath morning breaks, ſpirits of darkneſs have leaſt influence over mortals. After Saturday the Nun ſhall viſit you no more."

"May I not enquire," ſaid I, "by what means you are in poſſeſſion of a ſecret, which I have carefully concealed from the knowledge of every one?"

"How can I be ignorant of your diſtreſſes, when their cauſe at this moment ſtands beſide you?"

I ſtarted. The ſtranger continued:—

"Though to you only viſible for one hour in the twenty-four, neither day nor night does ſhe ever quit you; nor will ſhe ever quit you till you have granted her requeſt."

"And what is that requeſt?"

"That ſhe muſt herſelf explain: it lies not in my knowledge. Wait with patience for the night of Saturday: all ſhall be then cleared up."

I dared not preſs him further. He ſoon after changed the converſation, and talked of various matters. He named people who had ceaſed to exiſt for many centuries, and yet with whom he appeared to have been perſonally acquainted. I could not mention a country, however diſtant, which he had not viſited, nor could I ſufficiently admire the extent and variety of his information. I remarked to him, that having travelled, ſeen, and known ſo much, muſt have given him infinite pleaſure. He ſhook his head mournfully.

"No one," he replied, "is adequate to com-

prehend the misery of my lot! Fate obliges me to be constantly in movement. I am not permitted to pass more than a fortnight in the same place. I have no friend in the world, and, from the restlessness of my destiny, I never can acquire one. Fain would I lay down my miserable life, for I envy those who enjoy the quiet of the grave: but death eludes me, and flies from my embrace. In vain do I throw myself in the way of danger. I plunge into the ocean; the waves throw me back with abhorrence upon the shore: I rush into fire; the flames recoil at my approach: I oppose myself to the fury of banditti; their swords become blunted, and break against my breast. The hungry tiger shudders at my approach, and the alligator flies from a monster more horrible than itself. God has set his seal upon me, and all his creatures respect this fatal mark."

He put his hand to the velvet, which was bound round his forehead. There was in his eyes an expression of fury, despair, and malevolence, that struck horror to my very soul. An involuntary convulsion made me shudder. The stranger perceived it.

"Such is the curse imposed on me," he continued: "I am doomed to inspire all who look on me with terror and detestation. You already feel the influence of the charm, and with every succeeding moment will feel it more. I will not add to your sufferings by my presence. Farewell till Saturday. As soon as the clock strikes twelve, expect me at your chamber-door."

Having said this he departed, leaving me in astonishment at the mysterious turn of his manner and conversation. His assurances that I should soon be relieved from the apparition's visits, produced a good effect upon my constitution. Theodore, whom I rather treated as an adopted child than a domestic, was surprised at his return to observe the amendment in my looks. He congratulated me on this symptom of returning health, and declared himself delighted at my having received so much benefit from my conference with the Great Mogul. Upon enquiry I found that

the ſtranger had already paſſed eight days in Ratiſbon. According to his own account, therefore, he was only to remain there ſix days longer. Saturday was ſtill at the diſtance of three. Oh! with what impatience did I expect its arrival! In the interim, the Bleeding Nun continued her nocturnal viſits; but hoping ſoon to be releaſed from them altogether, the effects which they produced on me became leſs violent than before.

The wiſhed-for night arrived. To avoid creating ſuſpicion, I retired to bed at my uſual hour. But as ſoon as my attendants had left me, I dreſſed myſelf again, and prepared for the ſtranger's reception. He entered my room upon the turn of midnight. A ſmall cheſt was in his hand, which he placed near the ſtove. He ſaluted me without ſpeaking; I returned the compliment, obſerving an equal ſilence. He then opened his cheſt. The firſt thing which he produced was a ſmall wooden crucifix: he ſunk upon his knees, gazed upon it mournfully, and caſt his eyes towards heaven. He ſeemed to be praying devoutly. At length he bowed his head reſpectfully, kiſſed the crucifix thrice, and quitted his kneeling poſture. He next drew from the cheſt a covered goblet: with the liquor which it contained, and which appeared to be blood, he ſprinkled the floor; and then dipping in it one end of the crucifix, he deſcribed a circle in the middle of the room. Round about this, he placed various reliques, ſculls, thigh-bones, &c. I obſerved, that he diſpoſed them all in the form of croſſes. Laſtly, he took out a large Bible, and beckoned me to follow him into the circle. I obeyed.

"Be cautious not to utter a ſyllable!" whiſpered the ſtranger: "ſtep not out of the circle; and as you love yourſelf, dare not to look upon my face!"

Holding the crucifix in one hand, the Bible in the other, he ſeemed to read with profound attention. The clock ſtruck one! As uſual, I heard the ſpectre's ſteps upon the ſtair-caſe: but I was not ſeized with the accuſtomed ſhivering. I waited her approach with confidence. She entered the room, drew near the

circle, and ſtopped. The ſtranger muttered ſome words, to me unintelligible. Then raiſing his head from the book, and extending the crucifix toward the ghoſt, he pronounced, in a voice diſtinct and ſolemn,

"Beatrice! Beatrice! Beatrice!"

"What wouldſt thou?" replied the apparition in a hollow faltering tone.

"What diſturbs thy ſleep? Why doſt thou afflict and torture this youth? How can reſt be reſtored to thy unquiet ſpirit?"

"I dare not tell! I muſt not tell! Fain would I repoſe in my grave, but ſtern commands force me to prolong my puniſhment!"

"Knoweſt thou this blood? Knoweſt thou in whoſe veins it flowed! Beatrice? Beatrice! In his name, I charge thee to anſwer me."

"I dare not diſobey my taſkers."

"Dareſt thou diſobey me?"

He ſpoke in a commanding tone, and drew the ſable band from his forehead. In ſpite of his injunctions to the contrary, curioſity would not ſuffer me to keep my eyes off his face: I raiſed them, and beheld a burning croſs impreſſed upon his brow. For the horror with which this object inſpired me I cannot account, but I never felt its equal. My ſenſes left me for ſome moments: a myſterious dread overcame my courage; and had not the exorciſer caught my hand, I ſhould have fallen out of the circle.

When I recovered myſelf, I perceived that the burning croſs had produced an effect no leſs violent upon the ſpectre. Her countenance expreſſed reverence and horror, and her viſionary limbs were ſhaken by fear.

"Yes!" ſhe ſaid at length, "I tremble at that mark; I reſpect it! I obey you! Know then, that my bones lie ſtill unburied: they rot in the obſcurity of Lindenberg Hole. None but this youth has the right of conſigning them to the grave. His own lips have made over to me his body and his ſoul: never will I give back his promiſe, never ſhall he know a night devoid of terror, unleſs he engages to collect my mouldering

The Wandering Jew laying the Ghost of the Bleeding Nun. Page 80.

bones, and depoſit them in the family vault of his Andaluſian caſtle. Then let thirty maſſes be ſaid for the repoſe of my ſpirit, and I trouble this world no more. Now let me depart. Thoſe flames are ſcorching."

He let the hand drop ſlowly which held the crucifix, and which till then he had pointed towards her. The apparition bowed her head, and her form melted into air. The exorciſer led me out of the circle. He replaced the Bible, &c. in the cheſt, and then addreſſed himſelf to me, who ſtood near him ſpeechleſs from aſtoniſhment:

"Don Raymond, you have heard the conditions on which repoſe is promiſed you. Be it your buſineſs to fulfil them to the letter. For me, nothing more remains than to clear up the darkneſs ſtill ſpread over the ſpectre's hiſtory, and inform you, that, when living, Beatrice bore the name of las Ciſternas. She was the great aunt of your grandfather. In quality of your relation, her aſhes demand reſpect from you, though the enormity of her crimes muſt excite your abhorrence. The nature of thoſe crimes no one is more capable of explaining to you than myſelf. I was perſonally acquainted with the holy man who proſcribed her nocturnal riots in the Caſtle of Lindenberg, and I hold this narrative from his own lips:

"Beatrice de las Ciſternas took the veil at an early age, not by her own choice, but at the expreſs command of her parents. She was then too young to regret the pleaſures of which her profeſſion deprived her: but no ſooner did her warm and voluptuous character begin to be developed, than ſhe abandoned herſelf freely to the impulſe of her paſſions, and ſeized the firſt opportunity to procure their gratification. This opportunity was at length preſented, after many obſtacles which only added new force to her deſires. She contrived to elope from the convent, and fled to Germany with the Baron Lindenberg. She lived at his Caſtle ſeveral months as his avowed concubine. All Bavaria was ſcandalized by her impudent and abandoned conduct. Her feaſts vied in luxury with Cleopatra's; and Lindenberg became the theatre of

the moſt unbridled debauchery. Not ſatisfied with diſplaying the incontinence of a proſtitute, ſhe profeſſed herſelf an atheiſt; ſhe took every opportunity to ſcoff at her monaſtic vows, and loaded with ridicule the moſt ſacred ceremonies of religion.

"Poſſeſſed of a character ſo depraved, ſhe did not long confine her affections to one object. Soon after her arrival at the Caſtle, the Baron's younger brother attracted her notice by his ſtrong-marked features, gigantic ſtature, and Herculean limbs. She was not of an humour to keep her inclinations long unknown: but ſhe found in Otto Von Lindenberg her equal in depravity. He returned her paſſion juſt ſufficiently to increaſe it; and when he had worked it up to the deſired pitch, he fixed the price of his love at his brother's murder. The wretch conſented to this horrible agreement. A night was pitched upon for perpetrating the deed. Otto, who reſided on a ſmall eſtate a few miles diſtant from the Caſtle, promiſed that, at one in the morning, he would be waiting for her at Lindenberg-hole; that he would bring with him a party of choſen friends, by whoſe aid he doubted not being able to make himſelf maſter of the Caſtle; and that his next ſtep ſhould be the uniting her hand to his. It was this laſt promiſe which over-ruled every ſcruple of Beatrice, ſince, in ſpite of his affection for her, the Baron had declared poſitively, that he never would make her his wife.

"The fatal night arrived. The Baron ſlept in the arms of his perfidious miſtreſs, when the Caſtle bell ſtruck "one." Immediately Beatrice drew a dagger from underneath her pillow, and plunged it in her paramour's heart. The Baron uttered a ſingle dreadful groan, and expired. The murderess quitted her bed haſtily, took a lamp in one hand, in the other the bloody dagger, and bent her courſe towards the cavern. The porter dared not to refuſe opening the gates to one more dreaded in the Caſtle than its maſter. Beatrice reached Lindenberg-hole unoppoſed, where, according to promiſe, ſhe found Otto waiting for her. He received, and liſtened to her narrative with tranſport:

but ere ſhe had time to aſk why he came unaccompanied, he convinced her that he wiſhed for no witneſſes to their interview. Anxious to conceal his ſhare in the murder, and to free himſelf from a woman whoſe violent and atrocious character made him tremble with reaſon for his own ſafety, he had reſolved on the deſtruction of his wretched agent. Ruſhing upon her ſuddenly, he wreſted the dagger from her hand. He plunged it, ſtill reeking with his brother's blood, in her boſom, and put an end to her exiſtence by repeated blows.

"Otto now ſucceeded to the barony of Lindenberg. The murder was attributed ſolely to the fugitive Nun, and no one ſuſpected him to have perſuaded her to the action. But though his crime was unpuniſhed by man, God's juſtice permitted him not to enjoy in peace his blood-ſtained honours. Her bones lying ſtill unburied in the cave, the reſtleſs ſoul of Beatrice continued to inhabit the Caſtle. Dreſſed in her religious habit, in memory of her vows broken to Heaven, furniſhed with the dagger which had drunk the blood of her paramour, and holding the lamp which had guided her flying ſteps, every night did ſhe ſtand before the bed of Otto. The moſt dreadful confuſion reigned through the Caſtle. The vaulted chambers reſounded with ſhrieks and groans; and the ſpectre, as ſhe ranged along the antique galleries, uttered an incoherent mixture of prayers and blaſphemies. Otto was unable to withſtand the ſhock which he felt at this fearful viſion: its horrors increaſed with every ſucceeding appearance. His alarm at length became ſo inſupportable, that his heart burſt, and one morning he was found in his bed totally deprived of warmth and animation. His death did not put an end to the nocturnal riots. The bones of Beatrice continued to lie unburied, and her ghoſt ſtill hauned the Caſtle.

"The domains of Lindenberg now fell to a diſtant relation. But terrified by the accounts given him of the Bleeding Nun [ſo was the ſpectre called by the multitude], the new Baron called to his aſſiſtance a celebrated exorciſer. This holy man ſucceeded in oblig-

ing her to temporary repoſe: but though ſhe diſcovered to him her hiſtory, he was not permitted to reveal it to others, or cauſe her ſkeleton to be removed to hallowed ground. That office was reſerved for you; and till your coming, her ghoſt was doomed to wander about the Caſtle, and lament the crime which ſhe had there committed. However, the exorciſer obliged her to ſilence during his life-time. So long as he exiſted, the haunted chamber was ſhut up, and the ſpectre was inviſible. At his death, which happened in five years after, ſhe again appeared, but only once on every fifth year, on the ſame day and at the ſame hour when ſhe plunged her knife in the heart of her ſleeping lover: ſhe then viſited the cavern which held her mouldering ſkeleton, returned to the Caſtle as ſoon as the clock ſtruck two, and was ſeen no more till the next five years had elapſed.

"She was doomed to ſuffer during the ſpace of a century. That period is paſt. Nothing now remains but to conſign to the grave the aſhes of Beatrice. I have been the means of releaſing you from your viſionary tormentor; and amidſt all the ſorrows which oppreſs me, to think that I have been of uſe to you, is ſome conſolation. Youth, farewell! May the ghoſt of your relation enjoy that reſt in the tomb which the Almighty's vengeance has denied to me for ever!"

Here the ſtranger prepared to quit the apartment.

"Stay yet one moment!" ſaid I; "you have ſatisfied my curioſity with regard to the ſpectre, but you leave me a prey to yet greater reſpecting yourſelf. Deign to inform me to whom I am under ſuch real obligations. You mention circumſtances long paſt, and perſons long dead: you were perſonally acquainted with the exorciſer, who, by your own account, has been deceaſed near a century. How am I to account for this? What means that burning croſs upon your forehead, and why did the ſight of it ſtrike ſuch horror to my ſoul?"

On theſe points he for ſome time refuſed to ſatisfy me. At length, overcome by my entreaties, he conſented to clear up the whole, on condition that I

would defer his explanation till the next day. With this requeſt I was obliged to comply, and he left me. In the morning my firſt care was to enquire after the myſterious ſtranger. Conceive my diſappointment, when informed that he had already quitted Ratiſbon. I diſpatched meſſengers in purſuit of him, but in vain. No traces of the fugitive were diſcovered. Since that moment I never have heard any more of him, and 'tis moſt probable that I never ſhall."

[Lorenzo here interrupted his friend's narrative:

"How!" ſaid he, "you have never diſcovered who he was, or even formed a gueſs?"

"Pardon me," replied the Marquis: when I related this adventure to my uncle, the cardinal-duke, he told me, that he had no doubt of this ſingular man's being the celebrated character known univerſally by the name of *The Wandering Jew*. His not being permitted to paſs more than fourteen days on the ſame ſpot, the burning croſs impreſſed upon his forehead, the effect which it produced upon the beholders, and many other circumſtances, gave this ſuppoſition the colour of truth. The cardinal is fully perſuaded of it; and for my own part I am inclined to adopt the only ſolution which offers itſelf to this riddle." I return to the narrative from which I have digreſſed.]

From this period I recovered my health ſo rapidly as to aſtoniſh my phyſicians. The Bleeding Nun appeared no more, and I was ſoon able to ſet out for Lindenberg. The Baron received me with open arms. I confided to him the ſequel of my adventure; and he was not a little pleaſed to find that his manſion would be no longer troubled with the phantom's quinquennial viſits. I was ſorry to perceive, that abſence had not weakened Donna Rodolpha's imprudent paſſion. In a private converſation which I had with her during my ſhort ſtay at the Caſtle, ſhe renewed her attempts to perſuade me to return her affection. Regarding her as the primary cauſe of all my ſufferings, I entertained for her no other ſentiment than diſguſt. The ſkeleton of Beatrice was found in the place which ſhe

had mentioned. This being all that I fought at Lindenberg, I haſtened to quit the Baron's domains, equally anxious to perform the obſequies of the murdered Nun, and eſcape the importunity of a woman whom I deteſted. I departed, followed by Donna Rodolpha's menaces that my contempt ſhould not be long unpuniſhed.

I now bent my courſe towards Spain with all diligence. Lucas, with my baggage, had joined me during my abode at Lindenberg. I arrived in my native country without any accident, and immediately proceeded to my father's caſtle in Andaluſia. The remains of Beatrice were depoſited in the family vault, all due ceremonies performed, and the number of maſſes ſaid which ſhe had required. Nothing now hindered me from employing all my endeavours to diſcover the retreat of Agnes. The Baroneſs had aſſured me, that her niece had already taken the veil: this intelligence I ſuſpected to have been forged by jealouſy, and hoped to find my miſtreſs ſtill at liberty to accept my hand. I enquired after her family; I found that before her daughter could reach Madrid, Donna Ineſilla was no more: you, my dear Lorenzo, were ſaid to be abroad, but where I could not diſcover: your father was in a diſtant province, on a viſit to the Duke de Medina; and as to Agnes, no one could or would inform me what was become of her. Theodore, according to promiſe, had returned to Straſbourg, where he found his grandfather dead, and Marguerite in poſſeſſion of his fortune. All her perſuaſions to remain with her were fruitleſs: he quitted her a ſecond time, and followed me to Madrid. He exerted himſelf to the utmoſt in forwarding my ſearch: but our united endeavours were unattended by ſucceſs. The retreat which concealed Agnes remained an impenetrable myſtery, and I began to abandon all hopes of recovering her.

About eight months ago I was returning to my hotel in a melancholy humour, having paſſed the evening at the play-houſe. The night was dark, and I was

unaccompanied. Plunged in reflections which were far from being agreeable, I perceived not that three men had followed me from the Theatre, till, on turning into an unfrequented ſtreet, they all attacked me at the ſame time with the utmoſt fury. I ſprang back a few paces, drew my ſword, and threw my cloak over my left arm. The obſcurity of the night was in my favour. For the moſt part, the blows of the aſſaſſins, being aimed at random, failed to touch me. I at length was fortunate enough to lay one of my adverſaries at my feet; but before this I had already received ſo many wounds, and was ſo warmly preſſed, that my deſtruction would have been inevitable, had not the claſhing of ſwords called a cavalier to my aſſiſtance. He ran towards me with his ſword drawn: ſeveral domeſtics followed him with torches. His arrival made the combat equal: yet would not the bravoes abandon their deſign, till their ſervants were on the point of joining us. They then fled away, and we loſt them in the obſcurity.

The ſtranger now addreſſed himſelf to me with politeneſs, and enquired whether I was wounded. Faint with the loſs of blood, I could ſcarcely thank him for his ſeaſonable aid, and entreat him to let ſome of his ſervants convey me to the Hotel de las Ciſternas. I no ſooner mentioned the name than he profeſſed himſelf an acquaintance of my father's, and declared that he would not permit my being tranſported to ſuch a diſtance, before my wounds had been examined. He added, that his houſe was hard by, and begged me to accompany him thither. His manner was ſo earneſt, that I could not reject his offer; and, leaning upon his arm, a few minutes brought me to the porch of a magnificent hotel.

On entering the houſe, an old grey-headed domeſtic came to welcome my conductor: he enquired when the Duke, his maſter, meant to quit the country, and was anſwered, that he would remain there yet ſome months. My deliverer then deſired the family ſurgeon to be ſummoned without delay: his orders were

obeyed. I was ſeated upon a ſopha in a noble apartment; and my wounds being examined, they were declared to be very ſlight. The ſurgeon, however, adviſed me not to expoſe myſelf to the night air; and the ſtranger preſſed me ſo earneſtly to take a bed in his houſe, that I conſented to remain where I was for the preſent.

Being now left alone with my deliverer, I took the opportunity of thanking him in more expreſs terms than I had done hitherto; but he begged me to be ſilent upon the ſubject.

"I eſteem myſelf happy," ſaid he, "in having had it in my power to render you this little ſervice; and I ſhall think myſelf eternally obliged to my daughter for detaining me ſo late at the convent of St. Clare. The high eſteem in which I have ever held the Marquis de las Ciſternas, though accident has not permitted our being ſo intimate as I could wiſh, makes me rejoice in the opportunity of making his ſon's acquaintance. I am certain that my brother, in whoſe houſe you now are, will lament his not being at Madrid to receive you himſelf: but, in the Duke's abſence, I am maſter of the family, and may aſſure you, in his name, that every thing in the Hotel de Medina is perfectly at your diſpoſal."

Conceive my ſurpriſe, Lorenzo, at diſcovering, in the perſon of my preſerver, Don Gaſton de Medina. It was only to be equalled by my ſecret ſatisfaction at the aſſurance that Agnes inhabited the convent of St. Clare. This latter ſenſation was not a little weakened, when, in anſwer to my ſeemingly indifferent queſtions, he told me that his daughter had really taken the veil. I ſuffered not my grief at this circumſtance to take root in my mind: I flattered myſelf with the idea, that my uncle's credit at the court of Rome would remove this obſtacle, and that, without difficulty, I ſhould obtain for my miſtreſs a diſpenſation from her vows. Buoyed up with this hope, I calmed the uneaſineſs of my boſom; and I redoubled my endeavours to appear grateful for the attention, and pleaſed with the ſociety of Don Gaſton.

A domeſtic now entered the room, and informed me that the bravo whom I had wounded, diſcovered ſome ſigns of life. I deſired that he might be carried to my father's hotel, and ſaid that, as ſoon as he recovered his voice, I would examine him reſpecting his reaſons for attempting my life. I was anſwered that he was already able to ſpeak, though with difficulty. Don Gaſton's curioſity made him preſs me to interrogate the aſſaſſin in his preſence; but this curioſity I was by no means inclined to gratify. One reaſon was, that, doubting from whence the blow came, I was unwilling to place before Don Gaſton's eyes the guilt of a ſiſter. Another was, that I feared to be recognized for Alphonſo d'Alvarada, and precautions taken in conſequence to keep me from the ſight of Agnes. To avow my paſſion for his daughter, and endeavour to make him enter into my ſchemes, what I knew of Don Gaſton's character convinced me would be an imprudent ſtep; and conſidering it to be eſſential that he ſhould know me for no other than the Conde de las Ciſternas, I was determined not to let him hear the bravo's confeſſion. I inſinuated to him, that as I ſuſpected a Lady to be concerned in the buſineſs, whoſe name might accidentally eſcape from the aſſaſſin, it was neceſſary for me to examine the man in private. Don Gaſton's delicacy would not permit his urging the point any longer, and, in conſequence, the bravo was conveyed to my hotel.

The next morning I took leave of my hoſt, who was to return to the Duke on the ſame day. My wounds had been ſo trifling, that, except being obliged to wear my arm in a ſling for a ſhort time, I felt no inconvenience from the night's adventure. The ſurgeon who examined the bravo's wound declared it to be mortal: he had juſt time to confeſs, that he had been inſtigated to murder me by the revengeful Donna Rodolpha, and expired in a few minutes after.

All my thoughts were now bent upon getting to the ſpeech of my lovely Nun. Theodore ſet himſelf to work, and, for this time, with better ſucceſs. He at-

tacked the gardener of St. Clare ſo forcibly with bribes and promiſes, that the old man was entirely gained over to my intereſts; and it was ſettled that I ſhould be introduced into the convent in the character of his aſſiſtant. The plan was put into execution without delay. Diſguiſed in a common habit, and a black patch covering one of my eyes, I was preſented to the lady prioreſs, who condeſcended to approve of the gardener's choice. I immediately entered upon my employment. Botany having been a favourite ſtudy with me, I was by no means at a loſs in my new ſtation. For ſome days I continued to work in the convent-garden without meeting the object of my diſguiſe. On the fourth morning I was more ſucceſsful. I heard the voice of Agnes, and was ſpeeding towards the ſound, when the ſight of the domina ſtopped me. I drew back with caution, and concealed myſelf behind a thick clump of trees.

The prioreſs advanced, and ſeated herſelf with Agnes on a bench at no great diſtance. I heard her, in an angry tone, blame her companion's continual melancholy. She told her, that to weep the loſs of any lover, in her ſituation, was a crime; but that to weep the loſs of a faithleſs one, was folly and abſurdity in the extreme. Agnes replied in ſo low a voice that I could not diſtinguiſh her words, but I perceived that ſhe uſed terms of gentleneſs and ſubmiſſion. The converſation was interrupted by the arrival of a young penſioner, who informed the domina that ſhe was waited for in the parlour. The old Lady roſe, kiſſed the cheek of Agnes, and retired. The new-comer remained. Agnes ſpoke much to her in praiſe of ſomebody whom I could not make out; but her auditor ſeemed highly delighted, and intereſted by the converſation. The Nun ſhewed her ſeveral letters: the other peruſed them with evident pleaſure, obtained permiſſion to copy them, and withdrew for that purpoſe to my great ſatisfaction.

No ſooner was ſhe out of ſight, than I quitted my concealment. Fearing to alarm my lovely miſtreſs, I

drew near her gently, intending to discover myself by degrees. But who for a moment can deceive the eyes of love? She raised her head at my approach, and recognised me, in spite of my disguise, at a single glance. She rose hastily from her seat with an exclamation of surprise, and attempted to retire; but I followed her, detained her, and entreated to be heard. Persuaded of my falsehood, she refused to listen to me, and ordered me positively to quit the garden. It was now my turn to refuse. I protested that, however dangerous might be the consequences, I would not leave her till she had heard my justification. I assured her, that she had been deceived by the artifices of her relations: that I could convince her, beyond the power of doubt, that my passion had been pure and disinterested; and I asked her what should induce me to seek her in the convent, were I influenced by the selfish motives which my enemies had ascribed to me.

My prayers, my arguments, and vows not to quit her till she had promised to listen to me, united to her fears lest the nuns should see me with her, to her natural curiosity, and to the affection which she still felt for me, in spite of my supposed desertion, at length prevailed. She told me, that to grant my request at that moment was impossible; but she engaged to be in the same spot at eleven that night, and to converse with me for the last time. Having obtained this promise, I released her hand, and she fled back with rapidity towards the convent.

I communicated my success to my ally, the old gardener: he pointed out an hiding place, where I might shelter myself till night without fear of a discovery. Thither I betook myself at the hour when I ought to have retired with my supposed master, and waited impatiently for the appointed time. The chillness of the night was in my favour, since it kept the other nuns confined to their cells. Agnes alone was insensible of the inclemency of the air, and, before eleven, joined me at the spot which had witnessed our former interview. Secure from interruption, I related to her the

true cauſe of my diſappearing on the fatal fifth of May. She was evidently much affected by my narrative. When it was concluded, ſhe confeſſed the injuſtice of her ſuſpicions, and blamed herſelf for having taken the veil through deſpair at my ingratitude.

"But now it is too late to repine!" ſhe added; "the die is thrown: I have pronounced my vows, and dedicated myſelf to the ſervice of heaven. I am ſenſible how ill I am calculated for a convent. My diſguſt at a monaſtic life increaſes daily: ennui and diſcontent are my conſtant companions; and I will not conceal from you, that the paſſion which I formerly felt for one ſo near being my huſband, is not yet extinguiſhed in my boſom: but we muſt part! Inſuperable barriers divide us from each other, and on this ſide the grave we muſt never meet again!"

I now exerted myſelf to prove, that our union was not ſo impoſſible as ſhe ſeemed to think it. I vaunted to her the cardinal-duke of Lerma's influence at the court of Rome. I aſſured her, that I could eaſily obtain a diſpenſation from her vows; and I doubted not but Don Gaſton would concide with my views, when informed of my real name and long attachment. Agnes replied, that ſince I encouraged ſuch an hope, I could know but little of her father. Liberal and kind in every other reſpect, ſuperſtition formed the only ſtain upon his character. Upon this head he was inflexible: he ſacrificed his deareſt intereſts to his ſcruples, and would conſider it an inſult to ſuppoſe him capable of authoriſing his daughter to break her vows to heaven.

"But ſuppoſe," ſaid I, interrupting her—"ſuppoſe that he ſhould diſapprove of our union: let him remain ignorant of my proceedings till I have reſcued you from the priſon in which you are now confined. Once my wife, you are free from his authority. I need from him no pecuniary aſſiſtance; and when he ſees his reſentment to be unavailing, he will doubtleſs reſtore you to his favour. But, let the worſt happen; ſhould Don Gaſton be irreconcileable, my relations

will vie with each other in making you forget his loſs; and you will find in my father a ſubſtitute for the parent of whom I ſhall deprive you."

"Don Raymond," replied Agnes, in a firm and reſolute voice, "I love my father: he has treated me harſhly in this one inſtance; but I have received from him, in every other, ſo many proofs of love, that his affection is become neceſſary to my exiſtence. Were I to quit the convent, he never would forgive me; nor can I think that, on his death-bed, he would leave me his curſe, without ſhuddering at the very idea. Beſides, I am conſcious myſelf, that my vows are binding. Wilfully did I contract my engagement with heaven: I cannot break it without a crime. Then baniſh from your mind the idea of our being ever united. I am devoted to religion; and however I may grieve at our ſeparation, I would oppoſe obſtacles myſelf, to what I feel would render me guilty."

I ſtrove to over-rule theſe ill-grounded ſcruples. We were ſtill diſputing upon the ſubject, when the convent-bell ſummoned the Nuns to matins. Agnes was obliged to attend them; but ſhe left me not till I had compelled her to promiſe, that on the following night ſhe would be at the ſame place at the ſame hour. Theſe meetings continued for ſeveral weeks uninterrupted: and 'tis now, Lorenzo, that I muſt implore your indulgence. Reflect upon our ſituation, our youth, our long attachment. Weigh all the circumſtances which attended our aſſignations, and you will confeſs the temptation to have been irreſiſtible: you will even pardon me when I acknowledge that, in an unguarded moment, the honour of Agnes was ſacrificed to my paſſion."

[Lorenzo's eyes ſparkled with fury; a deep crimſon ſpread itſelf over his face: he ſtarted from his ſeat, and attempted to draw his ſword. The Marquis was aware of his movement, and caught his hand: he preſſed it affectionately:

"My friend! my brother! hear me to the concluſion! Till then reſtrain your paſſion; and be at leaſt

convinced, that if what I have related is criminal, the blame muſt fall upon me, and not upon your ſiſter."

Lorenzo ſuffered himſelf to be prevailed upon by Don Raymond's entreaties: he reſumed his place, and liſtened to the reſt of the narrative with a gloomy and impatient countenance. The Marquis thus continued:]

Scarcely was the firſt burſt of paſſion paſt, when Agnes, recovering herſelf, ſtarted from my arms with horror. She called me infamous ſeducer, loaded me with the bittereſt reproaches, and beat her boſom in all the wildneſs of delirium. Aſhamed of my imprudence, I with difficulty found words to excuſe myſelf. I endeavoured to conſole her: I threw myſelf at her feet, and entreated her forgiveneſs. She forced her hand from me, which I had taken, and would have preſſed to my lips.

"Touch me not!" ſhe cried, with a violence which terrified me. "Monſter of perfidy and ingratitude, how have I been deceived in you! I looked upon you as my friend, my protector: I truſted myſelf in your hands with confidence, and, relying upon your honour, thought that mine ran no riſk: and 'tis by you, whom I adored, that I am covered with infamy! 'Tis by you that I have been ſeduced into breaking my vows to God, that I am reduced to a level with the baſeſt of my ſex! Shame upon you, villain, you ſhall never ſee me more!"

She ſtarted from the bank on which ſhe was ſeated. I endeavoured to detain her; but ſhe diſengaged herſelf from me with violence, and took refuge in the convent.

I retired, filled with confuſion and inquietude. The next morning I failed not, as uſual, to appear in the garden; but Agnes was no where to be ſeen. At night I waited for her at the place where we generally met. I found no better ſucceſs. Several days and nights paſſed away in the ſame manner. At length, I ſaw my offended miſtreſs croſs the walk, on whoſe borders I was working: ſhe was accompanied by the ſame

young penſioner, on whoſe arm ſhe ſeemed, from weakneſs, obliged to ſupport herſelf. She looked upon me for a moment, but inſtantly turned her head away. I waited her return; but ſhe paſſed on to the convent without paying any attention to me, or the penitent looks with which I implored her forgiveneſs.

As ſoon as the nuns were retired, the old gardener joined me with a ſorrowful air.

"Segnor," ſaid he, "it grieves me to ſay, that I can be no longer of uſe to you; the Lady whom you uſed to meet has juſt aſſured me, that if I admitted you again into the garden, ſhe would diſcover the whole buſineſs to the lady prioreſs. She bade me tell you alſo, that your preſence was an inſult; and that, if you ſtill poſſeſs the leaſt reſpect for her, you will never attempt to ſee her more. Excuſe me then for informing you, that I can favour your diſguiſe no longer. Should the prioreſs be acquainted with my conduct, ſhe might not be contented with diſmiſſing me her ſervice: out of revenge, ſhe might accuſe me of having profaned the convent, and cauſe me to be thrown into the priſons of the Inquiſition."

Fruitleſs were my attempts to conquer this reſolution. He denied me all future entrance into the garden; and Agnes perſevered in neither letting me ſee or hear from her. In about a fortnight after, a violent illneſs which had ſeized my father obliged me to ſet out for Andaluſia. I haſtened thither, and, as I imagined, found the Marquis at the point of death. Though, on its firſt appearance, his complaint was declared mortal, he lingered out ſeveral months; during which, my attendance upon him in his malady, and the occupation of ſettling his affairs after his deceaſe, permitted not my quitting Andaluſia. Within theſe four days I returned to Madrid, and, on arriving at my hotel, I there found this letter waiting for me.

[Here the Marquis unlocked a drawer of a cabinet; he took out a folded paper, which he preſented to his auditor. Lorenzo opened it, and recogniſed his ſiſter's hand. The contents were as follows:

"Into what an abyſs of miſery have you plunged me! Raymond, you force me to become as criminal as yourſelf. I had reſolved never to ſee you more; if poſſible, to forget you; if not, only to remember you with hate. A being, for whom I already feel a mother's tenderneſs, ſolicits me to pardon my ſeducer, and apply to his love for the means of preſervation. Raymond, your child lives in my boſom. I tremble at the vengeance of the prioreſs. I tremble much for myſelf, yet more for the innocent creature whoſe exiſtence depends upon mine. Both of us are loſt, ſhould my ſituation be diſcovered. Adviſe me, then, what ſteps to take, but ſeek not to ſee me. The gardener, who undertakes to deliver this, is diſmiſſed, and we have nothing to hope from that quarter. The man engaged in his place is of incorruptible fidelity. The beſt means of conveying to me your anſwer, is by concealing it under the great ſtatue of St. Francis, which ſtands in the Capuchin cathedral; thither I go every Thurſday to confeſſion, and ſhall eaſily have an opportunity of ſecuring your letter. I hear that you are now abſent from Madrid. Need I entreat you to write the very moment of your return? I will not think it. Ah! Raymond! mine is a cruel ſituation! Deceived by my neareſt relations, compelled to embrace a profeſſion the duties of which I am ill calculated to perform, conſcious of the ſanctity of thoſe duties, and ſeduced into violating them by one whom I leaſt ſuſpected of perfidy, I am now obliged, by circumſtances, to chooſe between death and perjury. Woman's timidity, and maternal affection, permit me not to balance in the choice. I feel all the guilt into which I plunge myſelf when I yield to the plan which you before propoſed to me. My poor father's death, which has taken place ſince we met, has removed one obſtacle. He ſleeps in his grave, and I no longer dread his anger. But from the anger of God, oh! Raymond! who ſhall ſhield me? Who can protect me againſt my conſcience, againſt myſelf? I dare not dwell upon theſe thoughts; they will drive me mad. I have taken my reſolution. Procure a diſpenſation

from my vows, I am ready to fly with you. Write to me, my husband! Tell me that absence has not abated your love! Tell me that you will rescue from death your unborn child, and its unhappy mother. I live in all the agonies of terror. Every eye which is fixed upon me, seems to read my secret and my shame. And you are the cause of those agonies! Oh! when my heart first loved you, how little did it suspect you of making it feel such pangs!

"AGNES."

Having perused the letter, Lorenzo restored it in silence. The Marquis replaced it in the cabinet, and then proceeded:]

Excessive was my joy at reading this intelligence, so earnestly desired, so little expected. My plan was soon arranged. When Don Gaston discovered to me his daughter's retreat, I entertained no doubt of her readiness to quit the convent: I had, therefore, entrusted the Cardinal-duke of Lerma with the whole affair, who immediately busied himself in obtaining the necessary bull. Fortunately, I had afterwards neglected to stop his proceedings. Not long since I received a letter from him, stating that he expected daily to receive the order from the court of Rome. Upon this I would willingly have relied; but the Cardinal wrote me word, that I must find some means of conveying Agnes out of the Convent, unknown to the prioress. He doubted not but this latter would be much incensed by losing a person of such high rank from her society, and consider the renunciation of Agnes as an insult to her house. He represented her as a woman of a violent and revengeful character, capable of proceeding to the greatest extremities. It was therefore to be feared lest, by confining Agnes in the convent, she should frustrate my hopes, and render the Pope's mandate unavailing. Influenced by this consideration, I resolved to carry off my mistress, and conceal her till the arrival of the expected bull in the Cardinal-duke's estate. He approved of my design, and professed himself ready to give a shelter to the fugitive. I next

cauſed the new gardener of St. Clare to be ſeized privately, and confined in my hotel. By this means I became maſter of the key to the garden-door, and I had now nothing more to do than prepare Agnes for the elopement. This was done by the letter which you ſaw me deliver this evening. I told her in it, that I ſhould be ready to receive her at twelve to-morrow night; that I had ſecured the key of the garden, and that ſhe might depend upon a ſpeedy releaſe.

You have now, Lorenzo, heard the whole of my long narrative. I have nothing to ſay in my excuſe, ſave that my intentions towards your ſiſter have been ever the moſt honourable: that it has always been, and ſtill is, my deſign to make her my wife; and that I truſt, when you conſider theſe circumſtances, our youth, and our attachment, you will not only forgive our momentary lapſe from virtue, but will aid me in repairing my faults to Agnes, and ſecuring a lawful title to her perſon and her heart.

Here the Marquis concluded his adventures. Lorenzo, before he could determine on his reply, paſſed ſome moments in reflection. At length he broke ſilence:—

"Raymond," ſaid he, taking his hand, "ſtrict honour would oblige me to waſh off in your blood the ſtain thrown upon my family; but the circumſtances of your caſe forbid me to conſider you as an enemy. The temptation was too great to be reſiſted. 'Tis the ſuperſtition of my relations which has occaſioned theſe misfortunes, and they are more the offenders than yourſelf and Agnes. What has paſſed between you cannot be recalled, but may yet be repaired by uniting you to my ſiſter. You have ever been, you ſtill continue to be, my deareſt, and indeed my only friend. I feel for Agnes the trueſt affection, and there is no one on whom I would beſtow her more willingly than on yourſelf. Purſue, then, your deſign. I will accompany you to-morrow night, and conduct her myſelf to the houſe of the Cardinal. My preſence will

be a ſanction for her conduct, and prevent her incurring blame by her flight from the convent."

The Marquis thanked him in terms by no means deficient in gratitude. Lorenzo then informed him, that he had nothing more to apprehend from Donna Rodolpha s enmity. Five months had already elapſed ſince, in an exceſs of paſſion, ſhe broke a blood-veſſel, and expired in the courſe of a few hours. He then took leave of his future brother, and returned to the Palace de Medina.

The day was already on the point of breaking, when the Marquis retired to his chamber.—He threw himſelf upon his couch, ſleep ſoon ſtole over him, and his dreams preſented him with the moſt flattering pictures of happineſs with Agnes.

The morrow being arrived, Lorenzo haſtened to rejoin the Marquis. Every thing was ready for the ſecond elopement of Agnes; and at twelve, the two friends, with a coach and four, were at the garden-wall of the convent. Don Raymond drew out his key, and unlocked the door. They entered, and waited for ſome time in expectation of being joined by Agnes. After waiting till the break of day, and no ſigns of Agnes appearing, they retired without noiſe, alarmed at the failure of their plan, and ignorant of the cauſe of its ill ſucceſs.

The next morning Lorenzo went to the convent, and requeſted to ſee his ſiſter. The prioreſs appeared at the grate with a melancholy countenance. She informed him, that for ſeveral days Agnes had appeared much agitated; that ſhe had been preſſed by the nuns in vain to reveal the cauſe, and apply to their tenderneſs for advice and conſolation; that ſhe had obſtinately perſiſted in concealing the cauſe of her diſtreſs; but that on Thurſday evening it had produced ſo violent an effect upon her conſtitution, that ſhe had fallen ill, and was actually confined to her bed. Lorenzo did not credit a ſyllable of this account: he inſiſted upon ſeeing his ſiſter; if ſhe was unable to come to the grate, he deſired to be admitted to her cell. The

prioreſs croſſed herſelf! ſhe was ſhocked at the very idea of a man's profane eye pervading the interior of her holy manſion, and profeſſed herſelf aſtoniſhed that Lorenzo could think of ſuch a thing. She told him that his requeſt could not be granted; but that, if he returned the next day, ſhe hoped that her beloved daughter would then be ſufficiently recovered to join him at the parlour grate. With this anſwer Lorenzo was obliged to retire, unſatisfied, and trembling for his ſiſter's ſafety.

He returned the next morning at an early hour. "Agnes was worſe; the phyſician had pronounced her to be in imminent danger; ſhe was ordered to remain quit, and it was utterly impoſſible for her to receive her brother's viſit." Lorenzo ſtormed at this anſwer; but there was no reſource. He raved, he entreated, he threatened; no means were left untried to obtain a ſight of Agnes. His endeavours were as fruitleſs as thoſe of the day before, and he returned in deſpair to the Marquis. On his ſide, the latter had ſpared no pains to diſcover what had occaſioned his plot to fail. Don Chriſtoval, to whom the affair was now entruſted, endeavoured to worm out the ſecret from the old portereſs of St. Clare, with whom he had formed an acquaintance; but ſhe was too much upon her guard, and he gained fro n her no intelligence. The Marquis was almoſt diſtracted, and Lorenzo felt ſcarcely leſs inquietude. Both were convinced that the purpoſed elopement muſt have been diſcovered: they doubted not but the malady of Agnes was a pretence; but they knew not by what means to reſcue her from the hands of the prioreſs.

Regularly every day did Lorenzo viſit the convent: as regularly was he informed that his ſiſter rather grew worſe than better. Certain that her indiſpoſition was feigned, theſe accounts did not alarm him: but his ignorance of her fate, and of the motives which induced the prioreſs to keep her from him, excited the moſt ſerious uneaſineſs. He was ſtill uncertain what ſteps he ought to take, when the Marquis received a

letter from the cardinal-duke of Lerma. It inclosed the Pope's expected bull, ordering that Agnes should be released from her vows, and restored to her relations. This essential paper decided at once the proceedings of her friends; they resolved that Lorenzo should carry it to the domina without delay, and demand that his sister should be instantly given up to him. Against this mandate illness could not be pleaded: it gave her brother the power of removing her instantly to the palace de Medina, and he determined to use that power on the following day.

Scarcely was it day, and already Lorenzo was at the convent of St. Clare, furnished with the necessary mandate. The nuns were at matins. He waited impatiently for the conclusion of the service; at length the prioress appeared at the parlour-grate. Agnes was demanded. The old Lady replied with a melancholy air, that the dear child's situation grew hourly more dangerous: that the physicians despaired of her life: but that they had declared the only chance for her recovery consisted in keeping her quiet, and not permitting those to approach her whose presence was likely to agitate her. Not a word of all this was believed by Lorenzo, any more than he credited the expressions of grief and affection for Agnes with which this account was interlarded. To end the business, he put the Pope's bull into the hands of the domina, and insisted that, ill or in health, his sister should be delivered to him without delay.

The prioress received the paper with an air of humility; but no sooner had her eye glanced over the contents than her resentment baffled all efforts of hypocrisy. A deep crimson spread itself over her face, and she darted upon Lorenzo looks of rage and menace.

"This order is positive," said she, in a voice of anger, which she in vain strove to disguise: "willingly would I obey it, but, unfortunately, it is out of my power."

Lorenzo interupted her by an exclamation of surprise.

"I repeat it, Segnor, to obey this order is totally out of my power. From tendeneſs to a brother's feelings, I would have communicated the ſad event to you by degrees, and have prepared you to hear it with fortitude. My meaſures are broken through: this order commands me to deliver up to you the ſiſter Agnes without delay; I am, therefore, obliged to inform you, without circumlocution, that on Friday laſt ſhe expired."

Lorenzo ſtarted back with horror, and turned pale. A moment's recollection convinced him that this aſſertion muſt be falſe, and it reſtored him to himſelf.

"You deceive me!" ſaid he, paſſionately: "but five minutes paſt you aſſured me that, though ill, ſhe was ſtill alive. Produce her this inſtant! See her I muſt and will; and every attempt to keep her from me will be unavailing."

You forget yourſelf, Segnor: you owe reſpect to my age as well as my profeſſion. Your ſiſter is no more. If I at firſt concealed her death, it was from dreading leſt an event ſo unexpected ſhould produce on you too violent an effect. In truth, I am but ill repaid for my attention. And what intereſt, I pray you, ſhould I have in detaining her? To know her wiſh of quitting our ſociety is a ſufficient reaſon for me to wiſh her abſence, and think her a diſgrace to the ſiſterhood of St. Clare: but ſhe has forfeited my affection in a manner more culpable. Her crimes were great; and when you know the cauſe of her death, you will doubtleſs rejoice, Don Lorenzo, that ſuch a wretch is no longer in exiſtence. She was taken ill on Thurſday laſt on returning from confeſſion in the Capuchin chapel: her malady ſeemed attended with ſtrange circumſtances; but ſhe perſiſted in concealing its cauſe. Thanks to the Virgin, we were too ignorant to ſuſpect it. Judge then what muſt have been our conſternation, our horror, when ſhe was delivered the next day of a ſtillborn child, whom ſhe immediately followed to the grave. How, Segnor? Is it poſſible that your countenance expreſſes no ſurpriſe, no indignation? Is it

poſſible that your ſiſter's infamy was known to you, and that ſtill ſhe poſſeſſed your affection? In that caſe, you have no need of my compaſſion. I can ſay nothing more, except repeat my inability of obeying the orders of his Holineſs. Agnes is no more; and, to convince you that what I ſay is true, I ſwear by our Bleſſed Saviour, that three days have paſſed ſince ſhe was buried."

Here ſhe kiſſed a ſmall crucifix which hung at her girdle: ſhe then roſe from her chair, and quitted the parlour. As ſhe withdrew, ſhe caſt upon Lorenzo a ſcornful ſmile.

"Farewell, Segnor," ſaid ſhe; "I know no remedy for this accident. I fear that even a ſecond bull from the Pope will not procure your ſiſter's reſurrection."

Lorenzo alſo retired, penetrated with affliction: but Don Raymond's, at the news of this event, amounted to madneſs: he would not be convinced that Agnes was really dead; and continued to inſiſt that the walls of St. Clare ſtill confined her. No arguments could make him abandon his hopes of regaining her. Every day ſome freſh ſcheme was invented for procuring intelligence of her, and all of them were attended with the ſame ſucceſs.

On his part, Medina gave up the idea of ever ſeeing his ſiſter more; yet he believed that ſhe had been taken off by unfair means. Under this perſuaſion, he encouraged Don Raymond's reſearches, determined, ſhould he diſcover the leaſt warrant for his ſuſpicions, to take a ſevere vengeance upon the unfeeling prioreſs. The loſs of his ſiſter affected him ſincerely. Two tedious months paſſed away. Still no information was procured of Agnes. All but the Marquis credited her death.

All the reſearches of the Marquis de las Ciſternas proved vain. Agnes was loſt to him for ever. Deſpair produced ſo violent an effect upon his conſtitution, that the conſequence was a long and ſevere illneſs.

Both the cauſe and effects of the diſorder were highly afflicting to the brother of Agnes; yet Theodore's

grief was ſcarcely leſs ſincere. That amiable boy quitted not his maſter for a moment, and put every means in practice to conſole and alleviate his ſufferings. The Marquis had conceived ſo rooted an affection for his deceaſed miſtreſs, that it was evident to all that he never could ſurvive her loſs. Yet nothing could have prevented him from ſinking under his grief, but the perſuaſion of her being ſtill alive, and in need of his aſſiſtance.

Theodore was the only one who exerted himſelf to realize his maſter's chimeras. He was eternally buſied in planning ſchemes for entering the convent, or at leaſt of obtaining from the nuns ſome intelligence of Agnes. To execute theſe ſchemes was the only inducement which could prevail on him to quit Don Raymond. He became a very Proteus, changing his ſhape every day; but all his metamorphoſes were to very little purpoſe. One day, he took it into his head to diſguiſe himſelf as a beggar; he put a patch over his left eye, took his guitar in hand, and poſted himſelf at the gate of the convent.

"If Agnes is really confined in the convent," thought he, "and hears my voice, ſhe will recollect it, and poſſibly may find means to let me know that ſhe is here."

With this idea he mingled with a crowd of beggars who aſſembled daily at the gate of St. Clare to receive ſoup, which the nuns were accuſtomed to diſtribute at twelve o'clock. All were provided with jugs or bowls to carry it away; but as Theodore had no utenſil of this kind, he begged leave to eat his portion at the convent door. This was granted without diſficulty. His ſweet voice, and, in ſpite of his patched eye, his engaging countenance, won the heart of the good old portereſs, who, aided by a lay-ſiſter, was buſied in ſerving to each his meſs. Theodore was bid to ſtay till the others ſhould depart, and promiſed that his requeſt ſhould then be granted.

As ſoon as the crowd was gone, Theodore was beckoned to the gate, and deſired to come in. He obeyed with infinite readineſs, but affected great reſpect at paſ-

ſing the hallowed threſhold, and to be much daunted by the preſence of the reverend ladies. His feigned timidity flattered the vanity of the nuns, who endeavoured to re-aſſure him. The portereſs took him into her own little parlour: in the mean while, the lay-ſiſter went to the kitchen, and ſoon returned with a double portion of ſoup of better quality than what was given to the beggars. His hoſteſs added ſome fruits and confections from her own private ſtore, and both encouraged the youth to dine heartily. To all theſe attentions he replied with much ſeeming gratitude, and poured abundance of bleſſings upon his benefactreſſes. While he ate, the nuns admired the delicacy of his features, the beauty of his hair, and the ſweetneſs and grace which accompanied all his actions. They lamented to each other in whiſpers, that ſo charming a youth ſhould be expoſed to the ſeductions of the world, and agreed that he would be a worthy pillar of the catholic church. They concluded their conference by reſolving, that Heaven would be rendered a real ſervice, if they entreated the prioreſs to intercede for his admiſſion into the order of Capuchins.

This being determined, the portereſs, who was a perſon of great influence in the convent, poſted away in all haſte to the domina's cell. Here ſhe made ſo flaming a narrative of Theodore's merits, that the old Lady grew curious to ſee him. Accordingly, the portereſs was commiſſioned to convey him to the parlour-grate. In the interim, the ſuppoſed beggar was ſifting the lay-ſiſter with reſpect to the fate of Agnes: her evidence only corrobated the domina's aſſertions. She ſaid, that Agnes had been taken ill on returning from confeſſion, had never quitted her bed from that moment, and that ſhe had herſelf been preſent at the funeral. She even atteſted having ſeen her dead body, and aſſiſted with her own hands in adjuſting it upon the bier. This account diſcouraged Theodore; yet, as he had puſhed the adventure ſo far, he reſolved to witneſs its concluſion.

The portereſs now returned, and ordered him to follow her. He obeyed, and was conducted into the

parlour, where the lady prioreſs was already poſted at the grate. She aſked ſeveral queſtions reſpecting his parents, his religion, and what had reduced him to a ſtate of beggary. To theſe demands his anſwers were perfectly ſatisfactory and perfectly falſe. He was then aſked his opinion of a monaſtic life. He replied in terms of high eſtimation and reſpect for it. Upon this, the prioreſs told him, that his obtaining an entrance into a religious order was not impoſſible; that her recommendation would not permit his poverty to be an obſtacle; and that, if ſhe found him deſerving it, he might depend in future upon her protection. Theodore aſſured her, that to merit her favour would be his higheſt ambition; and having ordered him to return next day, when ſhe would talk with him further, the domina quitted the parlour.

The nuns, whom reſpect for the ſuperior had till then kept ſilent, now crowded all together to the grate, and aſſailed the youth with a multitude of queſtions. He had already examined each with attention. Alas! Agnes was not amongſt them. The nuns heaped queſtion upon queſtion ſo thickly, that it was ſcarcely poſſible for him to reply. One aſked where he was born, ſince his accent declared him to be a foreigner: another wanted to know why he wore a patch upon his left eye: Siſter Helena remarked his guitar, and enquired whether he was an adept in muſic. He replied with modeſty, that it was not for him to decide upon his talents, but requeſted permiſſion to appeal to them as judges. This was granted without difficulty. Theodore then played a ſhort ſymphony; after which, ſtretching his voice to its utmoſt extent, to facilitate its reaching the ear of Agnes, he ſung a favourite ſong, which he knew ſhe was well acquainted with. The nuns were delighted with the ſweetneſs of his voice, and maſterly manner of touching the inſtrument; but however acceptable this applauſe would have been at any other time, at preſent it was inſipid to Theodore. His artifice had not ſucceeded. He pauſed in vain between the ſtanzas; no voice replied to his.

The convent-bell now warned the nuns that it was time to aſſemble in the refectory. They were obliged to quit the grate: they thanked the youth for the entertainment which his muſic had afforded them, and charged him to return the next day. This he promiſed. The nuns, to give him the greater inclination to keep his word, told him that he might always depend upon the convent for his meals, and each of them made him ſome little preſent. One gave him a box of ſweetmeats; another, an agnus dei; ſome brought reliques of ſaints, waxen images, and conſecrated croſſes; and others preſented him with pieces of thoſe works in which the religious excel, ſuch as embroidery, artificial flowers, lace, and needle-work. All theſe he was adviſed to ſell, in order to put himſelf into better caſe; and he was aſſured that it would be eaſy to diſpoſe of them, ſince the Spaniards hold the performances of the nuns in high eſtimation. Having received theſe gifts with ſeeming reſpect and gratitude, he remarked, that, having no baſket, he knew not how to convey them away. Several of the nuns were haſtening in ſearch of one, when they were ſtopped by the return of an elderly woman, whom Theodore had not till then obſerved. Her mild countenance and reſpectable air prejudiced him immediately in her favour.

"Hah!" ſaid the portereſs, "here comes the Mother St. Urſula with a baſket."

The nun approached the grate, and preſented the baſket to Theodore: it was of willow, lined with blue ſatin, and upon the four ſides were painted ſcenes from the legend of St. Genevieve.

"Here is my gift," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe gave it into his hand: "Good youth, deſpiſe it not. Though its value ſeems inſignificant, it has many hidden virtues."

She accompanied theſe words with an expreſſive look. It was not loſt upon Theodore. In receiving the preſent, he drew as near the grate as poſſible.

"Agnes!" ſhe whiſpered in a voice ſcarcely intelligible.

Theodore, however, caught the ſound. He con-

cluded that ſome myſtery was concealed in the baſket, and his heart beat with impatience and joy. At this moment the domina returned. Her air was gloomy and frowning, and ſhe looked if poſſible more ſtern than ever.

"Mother St. Urſula, I would ſpeak with you in private."

The nun changed colour, and was evidently diſconcerted.

"With me?" ſhe replied in a faltering voice.

The domina motioned that ſhe muſt follow her, and retired. The Mother St. Urſula obeyed her. Soon after, the refectory bell ringing a ſecond time, the nuns quitted the grate, and Theodore was left at liberty to carry off his prize. Delighted that at length he had obtained ſome intelligence for the Marquis, he flew rather than ran till he reached the Hotel de las Ciſternas. In a few minutes he ſtood by his maſter's bed with the baſket in his hand. Lorenzo was in the chamber, endeavouring to reconcile his friend to a misfortune which he felt himſelf but too ſeverely. Theodore related his adventure, and the hopes which had been created by the Mother St. Urſula's gift. The Marquis ſtarted from his pillow. That fire which ſince the death of Agnes had been extinguiſhed, now revived in his boſom, and his eyes ſparkled with the eagerneſs of expectation. The emotions which Lorenzo's countenance betrayed were ſcarcely weaker, and he waited with inexpreſſible impatience for the ſolution of this myſtery. Raymond caught the baſket from the hands of his page: he emptied the contents upon the bed, and examined them with minute attention. He hoped that a letter would be found at the bottom. Nothing of the kind appeared. The ſearch was reſumed, and ſtill with no better ſucceſs. At length Don Raymond obſerved, that one corner of the blue ſatin lining was unripped: he tore it open haſtily, and drew forth a ſmall ſcrap of paper, neither folded nor ſealed. It was addreſſed to the Marquis de las Ciſternas, and the contents were as follows:

"Having recogniſed your page, I venture to ſend theſe few lines. Procure an order from the Cardinal-Duke for ſeizing my perſon, and that of the domina; but let it not be executed till Friday at midnight. It is the feſtival of St. Clare: there will be a proceſſion of nuns by torch-light, and I ſhall be among them. Beware, not to let your intention be known. Should a ſyllable be dropped to excite the domina's ſuſpicions, you will never hear of me more. Be cautious, if you prize the memory of Agnes, and wiſh to puniſh her aſſaſſins. I have that to tell, will freeze your blood with horror.

"Sr. URSULA."

No ſooner had the Marquis read the note, than he fell back upon his pillow deprived of ſenſe or motion. The hope failed him which till now had ſupported his exiſtence; and theſe lines convinced him but too poſitively that Agnes was indeed no more. Lorenzo felt this circumſtance leſs forcibly, ſince it had always been his idea that his ſiſter had periſhed by unfair means. When he found by the Mother St. Urſula's letter how true were his ſuſpicions, the confirmation excited no other ſentiment in his boſom than a wiſh to puniſh the murderers as they deſerved. It was no eaſy taſk to recall the Marquis to himſelf. As ſoon as he recovered his ſpeech, he broke out into execrations againſt the aſſaſſins of his beloved, and vowed to take upon them a ſignal vengeance. He continued to rave and torment himſelf with impotent paſſion, till his conſtitution, enfeebled by grief and illneſs, could ſupport itſelf no longer, and relapſed into inſenſibility. His melancholy ſituation ſincerely affected Lorenzo, who would willingly have remained in the apartment of his friend; but other cares now demanded his preſence. It was neceſſary to procure the order for ſeizing the prioreſs of St. Clare. For this purpoſe, having committed Raymond to the care of the beſt phyſicians in Madrid, he quitted the Hotel de las Ciſternas, and bent his courſe towards the palace of the Cardinal-duke.

His diſappointment was exceſſive, when he found that affairs of ſtate had obliged the Cardinal to ſet out for a diſtant province. It wanted but five days to Friday: yet, by travelling day and night, he hoped to return in time for the pilgrimage of St. Clare. In this he ſucceeded. He found the Cardinal-duke, and repreſented to him the ſuppoſed culpability of the prioreſs, as alſo the violent effects which it had produced upon Don Raymond. He could have uſed no argument ſo forcible as this laſt. Of all his nephews, the Marquis was the only one to whom the Cardinal-duke was ſincerely attached: he perfectly doted upon him, and the prioreſs could have committed no greater crime in his eyes, than to have endangered the life of the Marquis. Conſequently, he granted the order of arreſt without difficulty. He alſo gave Lorenzo a letter to a principal officer of the Inquiſition, deſiring him to ſee his mandate executed. Furniſhed with theſe papers, Medina haſtened back to Madrid, which he reached on the Friday, a few hours before dark. He found the Marquis ſomewhat eaſier, but ſo weak and exhauſted, that without great exertion he could neither ſpeak nor move. Having paſſed an hour by his bed-ſide, Lorenzo left him to communicate his deſign to his uncle, as alſo to give Don Ramirez de Mello the Cardinal's letter. The firſt was petrified with horror, when he learned the fate of his unhappy niece. He encouraged Lorenzo to puniſh her aſſaſſins, and engaged to accompany him at night to St. Clare's convent. Don Ramirez promiſed his firmeſt ſupport, and ſelected a band of truſty archers to prevent oppoſition on the part of the populace.

Followed by Raymond's ardent prayers for ſucceſs, Lorenzo was at the gates of St. Clare a full hour before the time appointed by the Mother St. Urſula. He was accompanied by his uncle, by Don Ramirez de Mello, and a party of choſen archers. Though in conſiderable numbers, their appearance created no ſurpriſe: a great crowd was already aſſembled before the convent-doors, in order to witneſs the proceſſion.

It was naturally ſuppoſed, that Lorenzo and his attendants were conducted thither by the ſame deſign. The Duke of Medina being recogniſed, the people drew back, and made way for his party to advance. Lorenzo placed himſelf oppoſite to the great gate, through which the pilgrims were to paſs. Convinced that the prioreſs could not eſcape him, he waited patiently for her appearance, which ſhe was expected to make exactly at midnight.

The nuns were employed in religious duties eſtabliſhed in honour of St. Clare, and to which no profane was ever admitted. The chapel-windows were illuminated. As they ſtood on the outſide, the auditors heard the full ſwell of the organ, accompanied by a chorus of female voices, riſe upon the ſtillneſs of the night. This died away, and was ſucceeded by a ſingle ſtrain of harmony: it was the voice of her who was deſtined to ſuſtain in the proceſſion the character of St. Clare. For this office the moſt beautiful virgin of Madrid was always ſelected, and ſhe, upon whom the choice fell, eſteemed it as the higheſt of honours.

The ſervice laſted till midnight was announced by the convent-bell. That ſound being heard, the muſic ceaſed: the voices died away ſoftly, and ſoon after the lights diſappeared from the chapel-windows. Lorenzo's heart beat high, when he found the execution of his plan to be at hand. From the natural ſuperſtition of the people, he had prepared himſelf for ſome reſiſtance: but he truſted that the Mother St. Urſula would bring good reaſons to juſtify his proceeding. He had force with him to repel the firſt impulſe of the populace, till his arguments ſhould be heard: his only fear was, leſt the domina, ſuſpecting his deſign, ſhould have ſpirited away the nun on whoſe depoſition every thing depended. Unleſs the Mother St. Urſula ſhould be preſent, he could only accuſe the prioreſs upon ſuſpicion; and this reflection gave him ſome little apprehenſion for the ſucceſs of his enterpriſe. The tranquillity which ſeemed to reign through the con-

vent, in ſome degree re-aſſured him: ſtill he expected the moment eagerly, when the preſence of his ally ſhould deprive him of the power of doubting.

The abbey of Capuchins was only ſeparated from the convent by the garden and cemetery. The monks had been invited to aſſiſt at the pilgrimage. They now arrived, marching two by two with lighted torches in their hands, and chaunting hymns in honour of St. Clare. Father Pablos was at their head, the abbot having excuſed himſelf from attending. The people made way for the holy train, and the friars placed themſelves in ranks on either ſide of the great gates. A few minutes ſufficed to arrange the order of the proceſſion. This being ſettled, the convent-doors were thrown open, and again the female chorus ſounded in full melody. Firſt appeared a band of choriſters. As ſoon as they had paſſed, the monks fell in two by two, and followed with ſteps ſlow and meaſured: next came the novices: they bore no tapers, as did the profeſſed, but moved on with eyes bent downwards, and ſeemed to be occupied by telling their beads. To them ſucceeded a young and lovely girl, who repreſented St. Lucia: ſhe held a golden baſon, in which were two eyes: her own were covered by a velvet bandage, and ſhe was conducted by another nun habited as an angel. She was followed by St. Catherine, a palm-branch in one hand, a flaming ſword in the other: ſhe was robed in white, and her brow was ornamented with a ſparkling diadem. After her appeared St. Genevieve, ſurrounded by a number of imps, who putting themſelves into groteſque attitudes, drawing her by the robe, and ſporting round her with antic geſtures, endeavoured to diſtract her attention from the book, on which her eyes were conſtantly fixed. Theſe merry devils greatly entertained the ſpectators, who teſtified their pleaſure by repeated burſts of laughter. The prioreſs had been careful to ſelect a nun whoſe diſpoſition was naturally ſolemn and ſaturnine. She had every reaſon to be ſatisfied with her choice: the drolleries of the imps were entirely thrown away, and St. Genevieve moved on without diſcompoſing a muſcle.

Each of theſe ſaints was ſeparated from the other by a band of choriſters, exalting her praiſe in their hymns, but declaring her to be very much inferior to St. Clare, the convent's avowed patroneſs. Theſe having paſſed, a long train of nuns appeared, bearing, like the choriſters, each a burning taper. Next came the reliques of St. Clare, incloſed in vaſes equally precious for their materials and workmanſhip: but they attracted not Lorenzo's attention. The nun who bore the heart occupied him entirely. According to Theodore's deſcription, he doubted not her being the Mother St. Urſula. She ſeemed to look round with anxiety. As he ſtood foremoſt in the rank by which the proceſſion paſſed, her eye caught Lorenzo's. A fluſh of joy overſpread her till then pallid cheek. She turned to her companion eagerly.

"We are ſafe," he heard her whiſper, "'tis her brother."

His heart being now at eaſe, Lorenzo gazed with tranquillity upon the remainder of the ſhow. Now appeared its moſt brilliant ornament: it was a machine faſhioned like a throne, rich with jewels, and dazzling with light. It rolled onwards upon concealed wheels, and was guided by ſeveral lovely children dreſſed as ſeraphs. The ſummit was covered with ſilver clouds, upon which reclined the moſt beautiful form that eyes ever witneſſed. It was a damſel repreſenting St. Clare: her dreſs was of ineſtimable price, and round her head a wreath of diamonds formed an artificial glory: but all theſe ornaments yielded to the luſtre of her charms. As ſhe advanced, a murmur of delight ran through the crowd. Even Lorenzo confeſſed ſecretly, that he never beheld more perfect beauty; and had not his heart been Antonia's, it muſt have fallen a ſacrifice to this enchanting girl. As it was, he conſidered her only as a fine ſtatue: ſhe obtained from him no tribute ſave cold admiration; and when ſhe had paſſed him, he thought of her no more.

"Who is ſhe?" aſked a by-ſtander in Lorenzo's hearing.

"One whoſe beauty you muſt often have heard celebrated. Her name is Virginia de Villa-Franca: ſhe is a penſioner of St. Clare's convent, a relation of the prioreſs, and has been ſelected with juſtice as the ornament of the proceſſion."

The throne moved onwards. It was followed by the prioreſs herſelf: ſhe marched at the head of the remaining nuns with a devout and ſanctified air, and cloſed the proceſſion. She moved on ſlowly: her eyes were raiſed to heaven: her countenance, calm and tranquil, ſeemed abſtracted from all ſublunary things; and no feature betrayed her ſecret pride at diſplaying the pomp and opulence of her convent. She paſſed along, accompanied by the prayers and benedictions of the populace: but how great was the general confuſion and ſurpriſe when Don Ramirez, ſtarting forward, challenged her as his priſoner!

For a moment, amazement held the domina ſilent and immoveable: but no ſooner did ſhe recover herſelf, than ſhe exclaimed againſt ſacrilege and impiety, and called upon the people to reſcue a daughter of the church. They were eagerly preparing to obey her; when Don Ramirez, protected by the archers from their rage, commanded them to forbear, and threatened them with the ſevereſt vengeance of the Inquiſition. At that dreaded word every arm fell, every ſword ſhrunk back into its ſcabbard. The prioreſs herſelf turned pale, and trembled. The general ſilence convinced her that ſhe had nothing to hope but from innocence, and ſhe beſought Don Ramirez, in a faultering voice, to inform her of what crime ſhe was accuſed.

"That you ſhall know in time," replied he; "but firſt I muſt ſecure the Mother St. Urſula."

"The Mother St. Urſula!" repeated the domina, faintly.

At this moment caſting her eyes round, ſhe ſaw Lorenzo and the Duke, who had followed Don Ramirez.

"Ah! great God!" ſhe cried, claſping her hands together with a frantic air, "I am betrayed."

"Betrayed!" replied St. Urſula, who now arrived, conducted by ſome of the archers, and followed by the

nun her companion in the proceſſion: "not betrayed, but diſcovered. In me recogniſe your accuſer: you know not how well I am inſtructed in your guilt:—Segnor," ſhe continued, turning to Don Ramirez, "I commit myſelf to your cuſtody. I charge the prioreſs of St. Clare with murder, and ſtake my life for the juſtice of my accuſation."

A general cry of ſurpriſe was uttered by the whole audience, and an explanation was loudly demanded. The trembling nuns, terrified at the noiſe and univerſal confuſion, had diſperſed, and fled different ways. Some regained the convent; others ſought refuge in the dwellings of their relations; and many, only ſenſible of their preſent danger, and anxious to eſcape from the tumult, ran through the ſtreets, and wandered they knew not whither. The lovely Virginia was one of the firſt to fly. And in order that ſhe might be better ſeen and heard, the people deſired that St. Urſula ſhould harangue them from the vacant throne. The nun complied: ſhe aſcended the glittering machine, and then addreſſed the ſurrounding multitude as follows:

"However ſtrange and unſeemly may appear my conduct, when conſidered to be adopted by a female and a nun, neceſſity will juſtify it moſt fully. A ſecret, an horrible ſecret, weighs heavy upon my ſoul: no reſt can be mine till I have revealed it to the world, and ſatisfied that innocent blood which calls from the grave for vengeance. Much have I dared, to gain this opportunity of lightening my conſcience. Had I failed in my attempt to reveal the crime, had the domina but ſuſpected that the myſtery was known to me, my ruin was inevitable. Angels who watch unceaſingly over thoſe who deſerve their favour, have enabled me to eſcape detection. I am now at liberty to relate a tale, whoſe circumſtances will freeze every honeſt ſoul with horror. Mine is the taſk to rend the veil from hypocriſy, and ſhew miſguided parents to what dangers the woman is expoſed, who falls under the ſway of a monaſtic tyrant.

"Among the votaries of St. Clare, none was more lovely, none more gentle, than Agnes de Medina. I

knew her well: she entrusted to me every secret of her heart: I was her friend and confidante, and I loved her with sincere affection. Nor was I singular in my attachment. Her piety unfeigned, her willingness to oblige, and her angelic disposition, rendered her the darling of all that was estimable in the convent. The prioress herself, proud, scrupulous, and forbidding, could not refuse Agnes that tribute of approbation which she bestowed upon no one else. Every one has some fault. Alas! Agnes had her weakness: she violated the laws of our order, and incurred the inveterate hate of the unforgiving domina. St. Clare's rules are severe: but, grown antiquated and neglected, many of late years have either been forgotten, or changed by universal consent into milder punishments. The penance adjudged to the crime of Agnes was most cruel, most inhuman. The law had been long exploded. Alas! it still existed, and the revengeful prioress now determined to revive it. This law decreed, that the offender should be plunged into a private dungeon, expressly constituted to hide from the world for ever the victim of cruelty and tyrannic superstition. In this dreadful abode she was to lead a perpetual solitude, deprived of all society, and believed to be dead by those whom affection might prompt to attempt her rescue. Thus was she to languish out the remainder of her days, with no other food than bread and water, and no other comfort than the free indulgence of her tears."

The indignation created by this account was so violent, as for some moments to interrupt St. Ursula's narrative. When the disturbance ceased, and silence again prevailed through the assembly, she continued her discourse, while at every word the domina's countenance betrayed her increasing terrors.

"A council of the twelve elder nuns was called: I was of the number. The prioress in exaggerated colours described the offence of Agnes, and scrupled not to propose the revival of this almost forgotten law. To the shame of our sex be it spoken, that either so absolute was the domina's will in the convent, or so much had disappointment, solitude, and self denial,

hardened their hearts and foured their tempers, that this barbarous propoſal was aſſented to by nine voices out of the twelve, I was not one of the nine. Frequent opportunities had convinced me of the virtues of Agnes, and I loved and pitied her moſt ſincerely. The Mothers Bertha and Cornelia joined my party: we made the ſtrongeſt oppoſition poſſible, and the ſuperior found herſelf compelled to change her intention. In ſpite of the majority in her favour, ſhe feared to break with us openly. She knew that, ſupported by the Medina Family, our forces would be too ſtrong for her to cope with: and ſhe alſo knew that, after being once impriſoned, and ſuppoſed dead, ſhould Agnes be diſcovered, her ruin would be inevitable; ſhe therefore gave up her deſign, though with much reluctance. She demanded ſome days to reflect upon a mode of puniſhment, which might be agreeable to the whole community; and ſhe promiſed, that as ſoon as her reſolution was fixed, the ſame council ſhould be again ſummoned. Two days paſſed away: on the evening of the third it was announced, that on the next day Agnes ſhould be examined: and that according to her behaviour on that occaſion her puniſhment ſhould be either ſtrengthened or mitigated.

"On the night preceding this examination, I ſtole to the cell of Agnes at an hour when I ſuppoſed the other nuns to be buried in ſleep. I comforted her to the beſt of my power: I bade her take courage, told her to rely upon the ſupport of her friends, and taught her certain ſigns, by which I might inſtruct her to anſwer the domina's queſtions by an aſſent or negative. Conſcious that her enemy would ſtrive to confuſe, embarraſs, and daunt her, I feared her being enſnared into ſome confeſſion prejudicial to her intereſts. Being anxious to keep my viſit ſecret, I ſtayed with Agnes but a ſhort time. I bade her not to let her ſpirits be caſt down. I mingled my tears with thoſe which ſtreamed down her cheek, embraced her fondly, and was on the point of retiring, when I heard the ſound of ſteps approaching the cell. I ſtarted back. A cur-

tain which veiled a large crucifix offered me a retreat, and I haſtened to place myſelf behind it. The door opened. The prioreſs entered, followed by four other nuns. They advanced towards the bed of Agnes. The ſuperior reproached her with her errors in the bittereſt terms. She told her, that ſhe was a diſgrace to the convent, that ſhe was reſolved to deliver the world and herſelf from ſuch a monſter, and commanded her to drink the contents of a goblet, now preſented to her by one of the nuns. Aware of the fatal properties of the liquor, and trembling to find herſelf upon the brink of eternity, the unhappy girl ſtrove to excite the domina's pity by the moſt affecting prayers. She ſued for life in terms which might have melted the heart of a fiend. She promiſed to ſubmit patiently to any puniſhment, to ſhame, impriſonment, and torture, might ſhe but be permitted to live! Oh! might ſhe but live another month, or week, or day! Her mercileſs enemy liſtened to her complaints unmoved: ſhe told her, that at firſt ſhe meant to have ſpared her life, and that if ſhe had altered her intention, ſhe had to thank the oppoſition of her friends. She continued to inſiſt upon her ſwallowing the poiſon: ſhe bade her recommend herſelf to the Almighty's mercy, not to hers; and aſſured her that in an hour ſhe would be numbered with the dead. Perceiving that it was vain to implore this unfeeling woman, ſhe attempted to ſpring from her bed, and call for aſſiſtance: ſhe hoped, if ſhe could not eſcape the fate announced to her, at leaſt to have witneſſes of the violence committed. The prioreſs gueſſed her deſign: ſhe ſeized her forcibly by the arm, and puſhed her back upon her pillow; at the ſame time drawing a dagger, and placing it at the breaſt of the unfortunate Agnes, ſhe proteſted that if ſhe uttered a ſingle cry, or heſitated a ſingle moment to drink the poiſon, ſhe would pierce her heart that inſtant. Already half-dead with fear, ſhe could make no further reſiſtance. The nun approached with the fatal goblet; the domina obliged her to take it, and ſwallow the contents.

She drank, and the horrid deed was accompliſhed. The nuns then ſeated themſelves round the bed; they anſwered her groans with reproaches; they interrupted with ſarcaſms the prayers in which ſhe recommended her parting ſoul to mercy: they threatened her with heaven's vengeance and eternal perdition: they bade her deſpair of pardon, and ſtrowed with yet ſharper thorns death's painful pillow. Such were the ſufferings of this young unfortunate, till releaſed by fate from the malice of her tormentors. She expired in horror of the paſt, in fears for the future; and her agonies were ſuch as muſt have amply gratified the hate and vengeance of her enemies. As ſoon as her victim ceaſed to breathe, the domina retired, and was followed by her accomplices.

"It was now that I ventured from my concealment. I dared not to aſſiſt my unhappy friend, aware that, without preſerving her, I ſhould only have brought on myſelf the ſame deſtruction. Shocked and terrified beyond expreſſion at this horrid ſcene, ſcarcely had I ſufficient ſtrength to regain my cell. As I reached the door of that of Agnes, I ventured to look towards the bed on which lay her lifeleſs body, once ſo lovely and ſweet! I breathed a prayer for her departed ſpirit, and vowed to revenge her death by the ſhame and puniſhment of her aſſaſſins. With danger and difficulty I have kept my oath. I unwarily dropped ſome words at the funeral of Agnes, while thrown off my guard by exceſſive grief, which alarmed the guilty conſcience of the prioreſs. My every action was obſerved; my every ſtep was traced. I was conſtantly ſurrounded by the ſuperior's ſpies. It was long before I could find the means of conveying to the unhappy girl's relations an intimation of my ſecret. It was given out, that Agnes had expired ſuddenly. This account was credited, not only by her friends in Madrid, but even by thoſe within the convent. The poiſon had left no marks upon her body: no one ſuſpected the true cauſe of her death, and it remained unknown to all, ſave the aſſaſſins and myſelf.

"I have no more to ſay: for what I have already ſaid, I will anſwer with my life. I repeat, that the prioreſs is a murdereſs; that ſhe has driven from the world, perhaps from heaven, an unfortunate, whoſe offence was light and venial; that ſhe has abuſed the power intruſted to her hands, and has been a tyrant, a barbarian, and an hypocrite. I alſo accuſe the four nuns, Violante, Camilla, Alix, and Mariana, as being her accomplices, and equally criminal."

Here St. Urſula ended her narrative. It created horror and ſurpriſe throughout; but when ſhe related the inhuman murder of Agnes, the indignation of the mob was ſo audibly teſtified, that it was ſcarcely poſſible to hear the concluſion. This confuſion increaſed with every moment. At length a multitude of voices exclaimed, that the prioreſs ſhould be given up to their fury. To this Don Ramirez poſitively refuſed to conſent. Even Lorenzo bade the people remember, that ſhe had undergone no trial, and adviſed them to leave her puniſhment to the Inquiſition. All repreſentations were fruitleſs; the diſturbance grew ſtill more violent, and the populace more exaſperated. In vain did Ramirez attempt to convey his priſoner out of the throng. Wherever he turned, a band of rioters barred his paſſage, and demanded her being delivered over to them more loudly than before. Ramirez ordered his attendants to cut their way through the multitude. Oppreſſed by numbers, it was impoſſible for them to draw their ſwords. He threatened the mob with the vengeance of the Inquiſition: but, in this moment of popular phrenſy, even this dreadful name had loſt its effect. Though regret for his ſiſter made him look upon the prioreſs with abhorrence, Lorenzo could not help pitying a woman in a ſituation ſo terrible: but in ſpite of all his exertions and thoſe of the Duke, of Don Ramirez and the archers, the people continued to preſs onwards. They forced a paſſage through the guards who protected their deſtined victim, dragged her from her ſhelter, and proceeded to take upon her a moſt ſummary and cruel

vengeance. Wild with terror, and ſcarcely knowing what ſhe ſaid, the wretched woman ſhrieked for a moment's mercy: ſhe proteſted that ſhe was innocent of the death of Agnes, and could clear herſelf from the ſuſpicion beyond the power of doubt. The rioters heeded nothing but the gratification of their barbarous vengeance. They refuſed to liſten to her: they ſhewed her every ſort of inſult, loaded her with mud and filth, and called her by the moſt opprobrious appellations. They tore her one from another, and each new tormentor was more ſavage than the former. They ſtifled with howls and execrations her ſhrill cries for mercy, and dragged her through the ſtreets, ſpurning her, trampling her, and treating her with every ſpecies of cruelty which hate or vindictive fury could invent. At length a flint, aimed by ſome well-directing hand, ſtruck her full upon the temple. She ſank upon the ground bathed in blood, and in a few minutes terminated her miſerable exiſtence. Yet, though ſhe no longer felt their inſults, the rioters ſtill exerciſed their impotent rage upon her lifeleſs body. They beat it, trod upon it, and ill-uſed it, till it became no more than a maſs of fleſh, unſightly, ſhapeleſs, and diſguſting.

Unable to prevent this ſhocking event, Lorenzo and his friends had beheld it with the utmoſt horror: but they were rouſed from their compelled inactivity, on hearing that the mob was attacking the convent of St. Clare. The incenſed populace, confounding the innocent with the guilty, had reſolved to ſacrifice all the nuns of that order to their rage, and not to leave one ſtone of the building upon another. Alarmed at this intelligence, they haſtened to the convent, reſolved to defend it, if poſſible, or, at leaſt, to reſcue the inhabitants from the fury of the rioters. Moſt of the nuns had fled; but a few ſtill remained in their habitation. Their ſituation was truly dangerous. However, as they had taken the precaution of faſtening the inner gates, with this aſſiſtance Lorenzo hoped to repel the mob, till Don Ramirez ſhould return to him with a more ſufficient force.

Having been conducted by the former diſturbance to the diſtance of ſome ſtreets from the convent, he did not immediately reach it. When he arrived, the throng ſurrounding it was ſo exceſſive, as to prevent his approaching the gates. In the interim, the populace beſieged the building with perſevering rage: they battered the walls, threw lighted torches in at the windows, and ſwore that by break of day not a nun of St. Clare's order ſhould be left alive. Lorenzo had juſt ſucceeded in piercing his way through the crowd, when one of the gates was forced open. The rioters poured into the interior part of the building, where they exerciſed their vengeance upon every thing which preſented itſelf in their paſſage. They broke the furniture into pieces, tore down the pictures, deſtroyed the reliques, and, in their hatred of her ſervant, forgot all reſpect to the ſaint. Some employed themſelves in ſearching out the nuns, others in pulling down parts of the convent, and others again in ſetting fire to the pictures and valuable furniture which it contained. Theſe latter produced the moſt deciſive deſolation. Indeed, the conſequences of their action were more ſudden than themſelves had expected or wiſhed. The flames riſing from the burning piles caught part of the building, which being old and dry, the conflagration ſpread with rapidity from room to room. The walls were ſoon ſhaken by the devouring element. The columns gave way, the roofs came tumbling down upon the rioters, and cruſhed many of them beneath their weight. Nothing was to be heard but ſhrieks and groans. The convent was wrapped in flames, and the whole preſented a ſcene of devaſtation and horror.

Lorenzo was ſhocked at having been the cauſe, however innocent, of this frightful diſturbance. He endeavoured to repair his fault by protecting the helpleſs inhabitants of the convent. He entered it with the mob, and exerted himſelf to repreſs the prevailing fury, till the ſudden and alarming progreſs of the flames compelled him to provide for his own ſafety. The people now hurried out as eagerly as they had

before thronged in; but their numbers clogging up the door-way, and the fire gaining upon them rapidly, many of them periſhed ere they had time to effect their eſcape. Lorenzo's good fortune directed him to a ſmall door in a farther aiſle of the chapel. The bolt was already undrawn: he opened the door, and found himſelf at the foot of St. Clare's ſepulchre.

Here he ſtopped to breathe. The Duke, and ſome of his attendants, had followed him, and thus were in ſecurity for the preſent. They now conſulted what ſteps they ſhould take to eſcape from this ſcene of diſturbance; but their deliberations were conſiderably interrupted by the ſight of volumes of fire riſing from amidſt the convent's maſſy walls, by the noiſe of ſome heavy arch tumbling down in ruins, or by the mingled ſhrieks of the nuns and rioters, either ſuffocating in the preſs, periſhing in the flames, or cruſhed beneath the weight of the falling manſion.

Lorenzo enquired, whither the wicket led? He was anſwered, to the garden of the Capuchins; and it was reſolved to explore an outlet upon that ſide. Accordingly, the Duke raiſed the latch, and paſſed into the adjoining cemetery. The attendants followed without ceremony. Lorenzo, being the laſt, was alſo on the point of quitting the colonnade, when he ſaw the door of the ſepulchre opened ſoftly. Some one looked out, but on perceiving ſtrangers uttered a loud ſhriek, ſtarted back again, and flew down the marble ſtairs.

"What can this mean?" cried Lorenzo: "Here is ſome myſtery concealed. Follow me without delay."

Thus ſaying, he haſtened into the ſepulchre, and purſued the perſon who continued to fly before him. The Duke knew not the cauſe of this exclamation, but, ſuppoſing that he had good reaſons for it, followed him without heſitation. The others did the ſame, and the whole party ſoon arrived at the foot of the ſtairs. The upper door having been left open, the neighbouring flames darted from above a ſufficient light to enable Lorenzo's catching a glance of the fugitive running through the long paſſages and diſtant vaults; but when a ſudden turn deprived him of this

aſſiſtance, total darkneſs ſucceeded, and he could only trace the object of his enquiry by the faint echo of retiring feet. The purſuers were now compelled to proceed with caution: as well as they could judge, the fugitive alſo ſeemed to ſlacken pace, for they heard the ſteps follow each other at longer intervals. They, at length, were bewildered by the labyrinth of paſſages, and diſperſed in various directions. Carried away by his eagerneſs to clear up this myſtery, and to penetrate into which he was impelled by a movement ſecret and unaccountable, Lorenzo heeded not this circumſtance till he found himſelf in total ſolitude. The noiſe of foot-ſteps had ceaſed, all was ſilent around, and no clue offered itſelf to guide him to the flying perſon. He ſtopped to reflect on the means moſt likely to aid his purſuit. He was perſuaded that no common cauſe would have induced the fugitive to ſeek that dreary place at an hour ſo unuſual: the cry which he had heard, ſeemed uttered in a voice of terror; and he was convinced that ſome myſtery was attached to this event. After ſome minutes paſſed in heſitation, he continued to proceed, feeling his way along the walls of the paſſage. He had already paſſed ſome time in this ſlow progreſs, when he deſcried a ſpark of light glimmering at a diſtance. Guided by this obſervation, and having drawn his ſword, he bent his ſteps towards the place whence the beam ſeemed to be emitted.

It proceeded from the lamp which flamed before St. Clare's ſtatue. Before it ſtood ſeveral females; their white garments ſtreaming in the blaſt as it howled along the vaulted dungeons. Curious to know what had brought them together in this melancholy ſpot, Lorenzo drew near with precaution. The ſtrangers ſeemed earneſtly engaged in converſation. They heard not Lorenzo's ſteps, and he approached unobſerved, till he could hear their voices diſtinctly.

"I proteſt," continued ſhe who was ſpeaking when he arrived, and to whom the reſt were liſtening with great attention; "I proteſt, that I ſaw them with my own eyes. I flew down the ſteps, they purſued me, and I eſcaped falling into their hands with difficulty.

Had it not been for the lamp, I ſhould never have found you."

"And what could bring them hither?" ſaid another, in a trembling voice; "do you think that they were looking for us?"

"God grant my fears may be falſe!" rejoined the firſt; "but I doubt they are murderers! If they diſcover us, we are loſt! As for me, my fate is certain. My affinity to the prioreſs will be a ſufficient crime to condemn me; and though till now theſe vaults have afforded me a retreat——"

Here looking up, her eye fell upon Lorenzo, who had continued to approach ſlowly.

"The murderers!" ſhe cried.

She ſtarted away from the ſtatue's pedeſtal on which ſhe had been ſeated, and attempted to eſcape by flight. Her companions at the ſame moment uttered a terrified ſcream, while Lorenzo arreſted the fugitive by the arm. Frightened and deſperate, ſhe ſank upon her knees before him.

"Spare me!" ſhe exclaimed; "for Chriſt's ſake, ſpare me! I am innocent, indeed, I am!"

While ſhe ſpoke, her voice was almoſt choaked with fear. The beams of the lamp darting full upon her face, which was unveiled, Lorenzo recognized the beautiful Virginia de Villa Franca. He haſtened to raiſe her from the ground, and beſought her to take courage. He promiſed to protect her from the rioters, aſſured her that her retreat was ſtill a ſecret, and that ſhe might depend upon his readineſs to defend her to the laſt drop of his blood. During this converſation, the nuns had thrown themſelves into various attitudes: one knelt, and addreſſed herſelf to Heaven; another hid her face in the lap of her neighbour; ſome liſtened motionleſs with fear to the diſcourſe of the ſuppoſed aſſaſſin; while others embraced the ſtatue of St. Clare, and implored her protection with frantic cries. On perceiving their miſtake, they crowded round Lorenzo, and heaped benedictions on him by dozens. He found that, on hearing the threats of the mob, and terrified by the cruelties which from the convent towers they

had ſeen inflicted on the ſuperior, many of the penſioners and nuns had taken refuge in the ſepulchre. Among the former was to be reckoned the lovely Virginia, nearly related to the prioreſs. She had more reaſon than the reſt to dread the rioters, and now beſought Lorenzo earneſtly not to abandon her to their rage. Her companions, moſt of whom were women of noble family, made the ſame requeſt, which he readily granted: he promiſed not to quit them till he had ſeen each of them ſafe in the arms of her relations. But he adviſed their deferring to quit the ſepulchre for ſome time longer, when the popular fury might be ſomewhat calmed, and the arrival of military force have diſperſed the multitude.

"Would to God," cried Virginia, "that I were already ſafe in my mother's embraces! How ſay you, Segnor? will it be long ere we may leave this place? Every moment that I paſs here, I paſs in torture!"

"I hope, not long," ſaid he; "but till you can proceed with ſecurity, this ſepulchre will prove an impenetrable aſylum. Here you run no riſque of a diſcovery, and I would adviſe your remaining quiet for the next two or three hours."

"Two or three hours!" exclaimed Siſter Helena: "If I ſtay another hour in theſe vaults, I ſhall expire with fear! Not the wealth of worlds ſhould bribe me to undergo again what I have ſuffered ſince my coming hither. Bleſſed Virgin! To be in this melancholy place in the middle of night, ſurrounded by the mouldering bodies of my deceaſed companions, and expecting every moment to be torn in pieces by their ghoſts who wander about me, and complain, and groan, and wail in accents that make my blood run cold———Chriſt Jeſus! It is enough to drive me to madneſs!"

"Excuſe me," replied Lorenzo, "if I am ſurpriſed, that while menaced by real woes you are capable of yielding to imaginary dangers. Theſe terrors are puerile and groundleſs: combat them, holy ſiſter; I have promiſed to guard you from the rioters, but againſt the attacks of ſuperſtition you muſt depend for

protection upon yourself. The idea of ghosts is ridiculous in the extreme; and if you continue to be swayed by ideal terrors——"

"Ideal!" exclaimed the nuns with one voice: "Why we heard it ourselves, Segnor! Every one of us heard it! It was frequently repeated, and it sounded every time more melancholy and deep. You will never persuade me that we could all have been deceived. Not we, indeed; no, no; had the noise been merely created by fancy——"

"Hark! hark!" interrupted Virginia, in a voice of terror; "God preserve us! There it is again!"

The nuns clasped their hands together, and sank upon their knees. Lorenzo looked round him eagerly, and was on the point of yielding to the fears which already had possessed the women. Universal silence prevailed. He examined the vault, but nothing was to be seen. He now prepared to address the nuns, and ridicule their childish apprehensions, when his attention was arrested by a deep and long-drawn groan.

"What was that?" he cried, and started.——

"There, Segnor!" said Helena: "Now you must be convinced! You have heard the noise yourself! Now judge whether our terrors are imaginary. Since we have been here, that groaning has been repeated almost every five minutes. Doubtless it proceeds from some soul in pain who wishes to be prayed out of purgatory: but none of us dare ask it the question. As for me, were I to see an apparition, the fright, I am very certain, would kill me out of hand."

As she said this, a second groan was heard yet more distinctly. The nuns crossed themselves, and hastened to repeat their prayers against evil spirits. Lorenzo listened attentively. He even thought that he could distinguish sounds as of one speaking in complaint, but distance rendered them inarticulate. The noise seemed to come from the midst of the small vault in which he and the nuns then were, and which a multitude of passages branching out in various directions

formed into a ſort of ſtar. Lorenzo's curioſity, which was ever awake, made him anxious to ſolve this myſtery. He deſired that ſilence might be kept. The nuns obeyed him. All was huſhed till the general ſtillneſs was again diſturbed by the groaning, which was repeated ſeveral times ſucceſſively. He perceived it to be moſt audible, when upon following the ſound he was conducted cloſe to the ſhrine of St. Clare.

"The noiſe comes from hence," ſaid he. "Whoſe is this ſtatue?"

Helena, to whom he addreſſed the queſtion, paused for a moment. Suddenly ſhe clapped her hands together.

"Aye!" cried ſhe, "it muſt be ſo. I have diſcovered the meaning of theſe groans."

The nuns crowded round her, and beſought her eagerly to explain herſelf. She gravely replied, that for time immemorial the ſtatue had been famous for performing miracles. From this ſhe inferred, that the ſaint was concerned at the conflagration of a convent which ſhe protected, and expreſſed her grief by audible lamentations. Not having equal faith in the miraculous ſaint, Lorenzo did not think this ſolution of the myſtery quite ſo ſatisfactory as the nuns, who ſubſcribed to it without heſitation. In one point it is true that he agreed with Helena. He ſuſpected that the groans proceeded from the ſtatue: the more he liſtened, the more was he confirmed in this idea. He drew nearer to the image, deſigning to inſpect it more cloſely: but perceiving his intention, the nuns beſought him for God's ſake to deſiſt, ſince, if he touched the ſtatue, his death was inevitable.

Not being convinced that his deſtruction would be ſo certain as the nuns ſeemed to think it, Lorenzo perſiſted in his reſolution. In ſpite of their prayers and threats, he approached the ſtatue. He ſprang over the iron rails which defended it, and the ſaint underwent a thorough examination. The image at firſt appeared to be of ſtone, but proved on further inſpection to be formed of no more ſolid materials than coloured wood.

He ſhook it, and attempted to move it: but it appeared to be of a piece with the baſe which it ſtood upon. He examined it over and over: ſtill no clue guided him to the ſolution of this myſtery, for which the nuns were become equally ſolicitous, when they ſaw that he touched the ſtatue with impunity. He pauſed and liſtened: the groans were repeated at intervals, and he was convinced of being in the ſpot neareſt to them. He muſed upon this ſingular event, and ran over the ſtatue with enquiring eyes. He again aſcended the pedeſtal, and diſcovered a ſmall knob of iron concealed on the ſaint's ſhoulder. This obſervation delighted him. He applied his fingers to the knob, and preſſed it down forcibly. Immediately a rumbling noiſe was heard within the ſtatue, as if a chain tightly ſtretched was flying back. Frightened at the ſound, the timid nuns ſtarted away, prepared to haſten from the vault at the firſt appearance of danger. All remaining quiet and ſtill, they again gathered round Lorenzo, and beheld his proceedings with anxious curioſity.

Finding that nothing followed this diſcovery, he deſcended. As he took his hand from the ſaint, ſhe trembled beneath his touch. This created new terrors in the ſpectators, who believed the ſtatue to be animated. Lorenzo's ideas upon the ſubject were widely different. He eaſily comprehended, that the noiſe which he had heard was occaſioned by his having looſened a chain which attached the image to its pedeſtal. He once more attempted to move it, and ſucceeded without much exertion. He placed it upon the ground, and then perceived the pedeſtal to be hollow, and covered at the opening with an heavy iron grate.

This excited ſuch general curioſity, that the ſiſters forgot both their real and imaginary dangers. Lorenzo proceeded to raiſe the grate, in which the nuns aſſiſted him to the utmoſt of their ſtrength. The attempt was accompliſhed with little difficulty. A deep abyſs now preſented itſelf before them, whoſe thick obſcurity the eye ſtrove in vain to pierce. The rays of the lamp were too feeble to be of much aſſiſtance.

Nothing was diſcernible, ſave a ſlight of rough unſhapen ſteps, which ſank into the yawning gulph, and were ſoon loſt in darkneſs. The groans were heard no more: but all believed them to have aſcended from this cavern. As he bent over it, Lorenzo fancied that he diſtinguiſhed ſomething bright twinkling through the gloom. He gazed attentively upon the ſpot where it ſhowed itſelf, and was convinced, that he ſaw a ſmall ſpark of light, now viſible, now diſappearing. He communicated this circumſtance to the nuns: they alſo perceived the ſpark: but when he declared his intention to deſcend into the cave, they united to oppoſe his reſolution. All their remonſtrances could not prevail on him to alter it. None of them had courage enough to accompany him; neither could he think of depriving them of the lamp. Alone therefore, and in darkneſs, he prepared to purſue his deſign, while the nuns were contented to offer up prayers for his ſucceſs and ſafety.

The ſteps were ſo narrow and uneven, that to deſcend them was like walking down the ſide of a precipice. The obſcurity by which he was ſurrounded, rendered his footing inſecure. He was obliged to proceed with great caution, leſt he ſhould miſs the ſteps, and fall into the gulph below him. This he was ſeveral times on the point of doing. However, he arrived ſooner upon ſolid ground than he had expected. He now found, that the thick darkneſs and impenetrable miſts which reigned through the cavern, had deceived him into the belief of its being much more profound than it proved upon inſpection. He reached the foot of the ſtairs unhurt: he now ſtopped, and looked round for the ſpark which had before caught his attention. He ſought it in vain: all was dark and gloomy. He liſtened for the groans; but his ear caught no ſound except the diſtant murmur of the nuns above, as in low voices they repeated their ave-marias. He ſtood irreſolute to which ſide he ſhould addreſs his ſteps. At all events he determined to proceed: he did ſo, but ſlowly, fearful leſt, inſtead

of approaching, he ſhould be retiring from the object of his ſearch. The groans ſeemed to announce one in pain, or at leaſt in ſorrow, and he hoped to have the power of relieving the mourner's calamities. A plaintive tone, ſounding at no great diſtance, at length reached his hearing: he bent his courſe joyfully towards it. It became more audible as he advanced; and he ſoon beheld again the ſpark of light, which a low projecting wall had hitherto concealed from him.

It proceeded from a ſmall lamp which was placed upon an heap of ſtones, and whoſe faint and melancholy rays ſerved rather to point out than diſpel the horrors of a narrow gloomy dungeon, formed in one ſide of the cavern: it alſo ſhowed ſeveral other receſſes of ſimilar conſtruction, but whoſe depth was buried in obſcurity. Dimly played the light upon the damp walls, whoſe dew-ſtained ſurface gave back a feeble reflection. A thick and peſtilential fog clouded the height of the vaulted dungeon. As Lorenzo advanced, he felt a piercing chillneſs ſpread itſelf through his veins. The frequent groans ſtill engaged him to move forwards. He turned towards them, and by the lamp's glimmering beams beheld, in a corner of this loathſome abode, a creature ſtretched upon a bed of ſtraw, ſo wretched, ſo emaciated, ſo pale, that he doubted to think her woman. She was half naked: her long diſhevelled hair fell in diſorder over her face, and almoſt entirely concealed it. One waſted arm hung liſtleſsly upon a tattered rug, which covered her convulſed and ſhivering limbs: the other was wrapped round a ſmall bundle, and held it cloſely to her boſom. A large roſary lay near her: oppoſite to her was a crucifix, on which ſhe bent her ſunk eyes fixedly, and by her ſide ſtood a baſket, and a ſmall earthen pitcher.

Lorenzo ſtopped: he was petrified with horror. He gazed upon the miſerable object with diſguſt and pity. He trembled at the ſpectacle: he grew ſick at heart: his ſtrength failed him, and his limbs were unable to ſupport his weight. He was obliged to

lean againſt the low wall which was near him, unable to forward or to addreſs the ſufferer. She caſt her eyes towards the ſtair-caſe: the wall concealed Lorenzo, and ſhe obſerved him not.

"No one comes!" ſhe at length murmured.

As ſhe ſpoke, her voice was hollow, and ratt'ed in her throat: ſhe ſighed bitterly.

"No one comes!" ſhe repeated: "no! they have forgotten me! they will come no more!"

She pauſed for a moment; then continued mournfully:

"Two days! two long, long days, and yet no food! and yet no hope, no comfort! Fooliſh woman! how can I wiſh to lengthen a life ſo wretched!—Yet ſuch a death! O God! to periſh by ſuch a death! to linger out ſuch ages in torture! Till now, I knew not what it was to hunger!—Hark!—No! no one comes: they will come no more."

She was ſilent. She ſhivered, and drew the rug over her naked ſhoulders:

"I am very cold: I am ſtill unuſed to the damps of this dungeon: 'tis ſtrange: but no matter. Colder ſhall I ſoon be, and yet not feel it. I ſhall be cold, cold as thou art."

She looked at the bundle, which lay upon her breaſt. She bent over it, and kiſſed it: then drew back haſtily, and ſhuddered with diſguſt:

"It was once ſo ſweet! It would have been ſo lovely, ſo like him! I have loſt it for ever. How a few days have changed it! I ſhould not know it again myſelf. Yet it is dear to me. God! how dear!—I will forget what it is! I will only remember what it was, and love it as well, as when it was ſo ſweet! ſo lovely! ſo like him!—I thought that I had wept away all my tears, but here is one ſtill lingering."

She wiped her eyes with a treſs of her hair. She put her hand for the pitcher, and reached it with difficulty. She caſt into it a look of hopeleſs enquiry. She ſighed, and replaced it upon the ground.

"Quite a void!—Not a drop!—Not one drop left

to cool my ſcorched-up burning palate!—Now would I give treaſures for a draught of water!—And they are God's ſervants who make me ſuffer thus!—They think themſelves holy, while they torture me like fiends!—They are cruel and unfeeling; and 'tis they who bid me repent; and 'tis they who threaten me with eternal perdition! Saviour! Saviour! you think not ſo!"

She again fixed her eyes upon the crucifix, took her roſary, and, while ſhe told her beads, the quick motion of her lips declared her to be praying with fervency.

While he liſtened to her melancholy accents, Lorenzo's ſenſibility became yet more violently affected. The firſt ſight of ſuch miſery had given a ſenſible ſhock to his feelings: but that being paſt, he now advanced towards the captive. She heard his ſteps, and uttering a cry of joy, dropped the roſary.

"Hark! hark! hark!" ſhe cried, "ſome one comes!"

She ſtrove to raiſe herſelf, but her ſtrength was unequal to the attempt, and ſhe fell back again upon the bed of ſtraw; Lorenzo ſtill approached, while the priſoner thus continued:

"Is it you, Camilla? You are come then at laſt? Oh! it was time! I thought that you had forſaken me; that I was doomed to periſh through hunger. Give me to drink, Camilla, for pity's ſake; I am faint with long faſting, and grown ſo weak that I cannot raiſe myſelf from the ground. Good Camilla, give me to drink, leſt I expire before you."

Fearing that ſurpriſe in her enfeebled ſtate might be fatal, Lorenzo was at a loſs how to addreſs her.

"It is not Camilla," ſaid he at length, ſpeaking in a ſlow and gentle voice. "I am no emiſſary of the cruel prioreſs. I pity your ſorrows, and come hither to relieve them."

"To relieve them! repeated the captive; "ſaid you, to relieve them?"

At the ſame time ſtarting from the ground, and ſupporting herſelf upon her hands, ſhe gazed upon the ſtranger earneſtly.

"Great God!—Is it no illuſion?—A man! Speak! Who are you? What brings you hither? Come you to ſave me, to reſtore me to liberty, to life, and light? Oh! ſpeak, ſpeak quickly, leſt I encourage an hope whoſe diſappointment will deſtroy me."

"Be calm!" replied Lorenzo, in a voice ſoothing and compaſſionate; "the domina, of whoſe cruelty you complain, has already paid the forfeit of her offences: you have nothing more to fear from her. A few minutes will reſtore you to liberty and the embraces of your friends, from whom you have been ſecluded. You may rely upon my protection. Give me your hand, and be not fearful. Let me conduct you where you may receive thoſe attentions which your feeble ſtate requires."

"Oh! yes! yes! yes! cried the priſoner with an exulting ſhriek; "there is a God then, and a juſt one! Joy! Joy! I ſhall once more breathe the freſh air, and view the light of the glorious ſun-beams! I will go with you! Stranger, I will go with you! Oh! Heaven will bleſs you for pitying an unfortunate! But this too muſt go with me," ſhe added, pointing to the ſmall bundle, which ſhe ſtill claſped to her boſom; "I cannot part with this. I will bear it away: it ſhall convince the world how dreadful are the abodes ſo falſely termed religious. Good ſtranger, lend me your hand to riſe; I am faint with want, and ſorrow, and ſickneſs, and my ſtrength has quite forſaken me! So, that is well!"

As Lorenzo ſtooped to raiſe her, the beams of the lamp ſtruck full upon his face.

"Almighty God!" ſhe exclaimed: "Is it poſſible? —That look! thoſe features!—Oh! yes, it is, it is—"

She extended her arms to throw them round him, but her enfeebled frame was unable to ſuſtain the emotions which agitated her boſom. She fainted, and again ſank upon the bed of ſtraw.

Lorenzo was ſurpriſed at her laſt exclamation. He thought that he had before heard ſuch accents as her hollow voice had juſt formed, but where, he could

not remember. He ſaw, that in her dangerous ſituation immediate phyſical aid was abſolutely neceſſary, and he haſtened to convey her from the dungeon. He was at firſt prevented from doing ſo by a ſtrong chain faſtened round the priſoner's body, and fixing her to the neighbouring wall. However, his natural ſtrength being aided by anxiety to relieve the unfortunate, he ſoon forced out the ſtaple, to which one end of the chain was attached: then taking the captive in his arms, he bent his courſe towards the ſtair-caſe. The rays of the lamp above, as well as the murmur of female voices, guided his ſteps. He gained the ſtairs, and in a few minutes after arrived at the iron-grate.

The nuns during his abſence had been terribly tormented by curioſity and apprehenſion. They were equally ſurpriſed and delighted on ſeeing him ſuddenly emerge from the cave. Every heart was filled with compaſſion for the miſerable creature, whom he bore in his arms. While the nuns, and Virginia in particular, employed themſelves in ſtriving to recall her to her ſenſes, Lorenzo related in few words the manner of his finding her. He then obſerved to them, that by this time the tumult muſt have been quelled, and that he could now conduct them to their friends without danger. All were eager to quit the ſepulchre. Still, to prevent all poſſibility of ill-uſage, they beſought Lorenzo to venture out firſt alone, and examine whether the coaſt was clear. With this requeſt he complied. Helena offered to conduct him to the ſtair-caſe, and they were on the point of departing, when a ſtrong light flaſhed from ſeveral paſſages upon the adjacent walls. At the ſame time ſteps were heard of people approaching haſtily, and whoſe number ſeemed to be conſiderable. The nuns were greatly alarmed at this circumſtance; they ſuppoſed their retreat to be diſcovered, and the rioters to be advancing in purſuit of them. Haſtily quitting the priſoner, who remained inſenſible, they crowded round Lorenzo, and claimed his promiſe to protect them. Virginia alone forgot her own danger by ſtriving to re-

lieve the ſorrows of another. She ſupported the ſufferer's head upon her knees, bathing her temples with roſe-water, chafing her cold hands, and ſprinkling her face with tears which were drawn from her by compaſſion. The ſtrangers approaching nearer, Lorenzo was enabled to diſpel the fears of the ſuppliants. His name pronounced by a number of voices, among which he diſtinguiſhed the Duke's, pealed along the vaults, and convinced him that he was the object of their ſearch. He communicated this intelligence to the nuns, who received it with rapture. A few moments after confirmed his idea. Don Ramirez, as well as the Duke, appeared, followed by attendants with torches. They had been ſeeking him through the vaults, in order to let him know that the mob was diſperſed, and the riot entirely over. Lorenzo recounted briefly his adventure in the cavern, and explained how much the unknown was in want of medical aſſiſtance.

He then conveyed the nuns in ſafety to the dwellings of their reſpective friends. The reſcued priſoner was ſtill inſenſible, and gave no ſigns of life, except by occaſional groans. At the expreſs deſire of Virginia, ſhe was borne upon a ſort of litter, and conveyed to the palace of her father, the Marquis de Villa Franca. Virginia, who was conſtantly by the ſide of it, was apprehenſive that, exhauſted by long abſtinence, and agitated by the ſudden change from bonds and darkneſs to liberty and light, her frame would never get the better of the ſhock.

On entering the palace, Virginia's firſt care was to ſummon the family phyſician, and take care of her unknown charge. Her mother haſtened to ſhare with her the charitable office. Alarmed by the riots, and trembling for his daughter's ſafety, who was his only child, the Marquis had flown to St. Clare's convent, and was ſtill employed in ſeeking her. Meſſengers were now diſpatched on all ſides to inform him, that he would find her ſafe at his hotel, and deſire him to haſten thither immediately. His abſence gave Virginia liberty to beſtow her whole attention upon her pa-

tient; and though much diſordered herſelf by the adventures of the night, no perſuaſion could induce her to quit the bed-ſide of the ſufferer. Her conſtitution being much enfeebled by want and ſorrow, it was ſome time before the ſtranger was reſtored to her ſenſes. She found great difficulty in ſwallowing the medicines preſcribed to her; but this obſtacle being removed, ſhe eaſily conquered her diſeaſe, which proceeded from nothing but weakneſs. The attention which was paid her, the wholeſome food to which ſhe had been long a ſtranger, and her joy at being reſtored to liberty, to ſociety, and, as ſhe dared to hope, to love, all combined to her ſpeedy re-eſtabliſhment.

This victim of monaſtic cruelty was indeed no other than the unfortunate Agnes. During her abode in the convent, ſhe had been well known to Virginia; but her emaciated form, her features altered by affliction, her death univerſally credited, and her overgrown and matted hair which hung over her face and boſom in diſorder, at firſt had prevented her being recollected.

It may eaſily be expected that Agnes was not long without enquiring after Don Raymond. She was ſhocked to hear the wretched ſituation to which grief had reduced him; yet ſhe could not help exulting ſecretly, when ſhe reflected that his illneſs proved the ſincerity of his love. The Duke undertook the office himſelf, of announcing to the invalid the happineſs which awaited him. Though he omitted no precaution to prepare him for ſuch an event, at this ſudden change from deſpair to happineſs, Raymond's tranſports were ſo violent, as nearly to have proved fatal to him. Theſe once paſſed, the tranquillity of his mind, the aſſurance of felicity, and above all, the preſence of Agnes (who was no ſooner re-eſtabliſhed by the care of Virginia and the Marchioneſs, than ſhe haſtened to attend her lover), ſoon enabled him to overcome the effects of his late dreadful malady. The calm of his ſoul communicated itſelf to his body, and he recovered with ſuch rapidity as to create univerſal ſurpriſe.

One evening he ſeemed to be in better ſpirits than

uſual: Agnes and Lorenzo, the Duke, Virginia, and her parents, were ſitting round him. Lorenzo now, for the firſt time entreated his ſiſter to inform him how ſhe had eſcaped the effects of the poiſon which St. Urſula had ſeen her ſwallow. The whole ſociety ſeconding his entreaties, Agnes obeyed. She firſt related, that having accidentally let fall the letter which Raymond had placed for her in the chapel, the abbot picked it up, and his eye catching the firſt lines of it, he diſcovered the plan which was laid down for her elopement. He immediately delivered it to the prioreſs, who, enraged at the indignity offered to her convent, inſtantly conveyed her by force from the chapel. Having ſecured her in the convent, ſhe called a council of nuns, and propoſed the ſentence as related by the Mother St. Urſula. Agnes then proceeded in her narrative as follows:

CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF AGNES DE MEDINA.

MY ſuppoſed death was attended with the greateſt agonies. Thoſe moments which I believed my laſt were embittered by the domina's aſſurances that I could not eſcape perdition; and, as my eyes cloſed, I heard her rage exhale itſelf in curſes on my offence. The horror of this ſituation, of a death-bed from which hope was baniſhed, of a ſleep from which I was only to wake to find myſelf the prey of flames and furies, was more dreadful than I can deſcribe. When animation revived in me, my ſoul was ſtill impreſſed with fear, expecting to behold the miniſters of divine vengeance.

A full hour elapſed, before I was ſufficiently myſelf to examine the ſurrounding objects. When I did examine them, what terror filled my boſom! I found myſelf extended upon a ſort of wicker couch. It had ſix handles to it, which doubtleſs had ſerved the nuns to convey me to my grave. I was covered with a linen cloth: ſeveral faded flowers were ſtrown over me. On one ſide lay a ſmall wooden crucifix: on the other a roſary of large beads. Four low narrow walls con-

fined me. The top was alſo covered, and in it was fitted a ſmall grated door, through which was admitted the little air that circulated in this miſerable place. A faint glimmering of light, which ſtreamed through the bars, permitted me to diſtinguiſh the ſurrounding horrors. I was oppreſſed by a noiſome ſuffocating ſmell; and perceiving that the grated door was unfaſtened, I thought that I might poſſibly effect my eſcape. As I raiſed myſelf with this deſign, my hand reſted upon ſomething ſoft: I graſped it, and advanced it towards the light. Almighty God! what was my diſguſt! my conſternation! In ſpite of its putridity, and the worms which preyed upon it, I perceived a corrupted human head, and recogniſed the features of a nun who had died ſome months before. I threw it from me, and ſank almoſt lifeleſs upon my bier.

When my ſtrength returned, this circumſtance, and the conſciouſneſs of being ſurrounded by the loathſome and mouldering bodies of my companions, increaſed my deſire to eſcape from my dreadful priſon. I again moved towards the light. The grated door was within my reach. I lifted it without difficulty. Aiding myſelf by the irregularity of the walls, ſome of whoſe ſtones projected beyond the reſt, I contrived to aſcend them, and drag myſelf out of my priſon. I now found myſelf in a vault tolerably ſpacious. Several tombs were ranged along the ſides, and ſeemed to be conſiderably ſunk within the earth. A ſepulchral lamp was ſuſpended from the roof by an iron chain, and ſhed a gloomy light through the dungeon. Emblems of death were ſeen on every ſide: ſkulls, ſhoulder-blades, thigh-bones, and other reliques of mortality, were ſcattered upon the dewy ground. Each tomb was ornamented with a large crucifix, and in one corner ſtood a wooden ſtatue of St. Clare. To theſe objects I at firſt paid no attention: a door, the only outlet from the vault, had attracted my eyes. I haſtened towards it, having wrapped my winding-ſheet cloſely round me. I puſhed againſt the door, and to my inexpreſſible terror found that it was faſtened on the outſide.

I ſtretched my voice to the extent of its compaſs, and ſhrieked. I was remote from the hearing of every one. No friendly voice replied to mine. A profound and melancholy ſilence prevailed through the vault, and I deſpaired of liberty. My long abſtinence from food now began to torment me. The tortures which hunger inflicted on me, were the moſt painful and inſupportable: yet they ſeemed to increaſe with every hour which paſſed over my head. Sometimes I threw myſelf upon the ground, and rolled upon it wild and deſperate: ſometimes ſtarting up, I returned to the door, again ſtrove to force it open, and repeated my fruitleſs cries for ſuccour. Often was I on the point of ſtriking my temple againſt the ſharp corner of ſome monument, daſhing out my brains, and thus terminating my woes at once. But ſtill the remembrance of my baby vanquiſhed my reſolution. I trembled at a deed, which equally endangered my child's exiſtence and my own. Then would I vent my anguiſh in loud exclamations and paſſionate complaints; and then again my ſtrength failing me, ſilent and hopeleſs would I ſit down upon the baſe of St. Clare's ſtatue, fold my arms, and abandon myſelf to ſullen deſpair. Thus paſſed ſeveral wretched hours. Death advanced towards me with rapid ſtrides, and I expected every ſucceeding moment would be that of my diſſolution. Suddenly a neighbouring tomb caught my eye: a baſket ſtood upon it which till then I had not obſerved. I ſtarted from my ſeat: I made towards it as ſwiftly as my exhauſted frame would permit. How eagerly did I ſeize the baſket, on finding it to contain a loaf of coarſe bread and a ſmall bottle of water!

I threw myſelf with avidity upon theſe humble aliments. They had to all appearances been placed in the vault for ſeveral days. The bread was hard, and the water tainted: yet never did I taſte food ſo delicious. When the cravings of appetite were ſatisfied, I buſied myſelf with conjectures upon this new circumſtance.

But my meditations were ſoon interrupted by the ſound of diſtant foot-ſteps. They approached, but ſlowly. Rays of light now darted through the cre-

vices of the door. Uncertain whether the perſons who advanced came to relieve me, or were conducted by ſome other motive to the vault, I failed not to attract their notice by loud cries for help. Still the ſounds drew near. The light grew ſtronger. At length with inexpreſſible pleaſure I heard the key turning in the lock. Perſuaded that my deliverance was at hand, I flew towards the door with a ſhriek of joy. It opened: but all my hopes of eſcape died away, when the prioreſs appeared followed by the ſame four nuns who had been witneſſes of my ſuppoſed death. They bore torches in their hands, and gazed upon me in fearful ſilence.

I ſtarted back in terror. The domina deſcended into the vault, as did alſo her companions. She bent upon me a ſtern reſentful eye, but expreſſed no ſurpriſe at finding me ſtill living. She took the ſeat which I had juſt quitted. The door was again cloſed, and the nuns ranged themſelves behind their ſuperior, while the glare of their torches, dimmed by the vapours and dampneſs of the vault, gilded with faint beams the ſurrounding monuments. For ſome moments all preſerved a dead and ſolemn ſilence. I ſtood at ſome diſtance from the prioreſs. At length ſhe beckoned me to advance. Trembling at the ſeverity of her aſpect, my ſtrength ſcarce ſufficed me to obey her. I drew near, but my limbs were unable to ſupport their burthen. I ſank upon my knees, I claſped my hands, and lifted them up to her for mercy, but had no power to articulate a ſyllable.

She gazed upon me with angry eyes.

"Do I ſee a penitent, or a criminal?" ſhe ſaid at length: "Are thoſe hands raiſed in contrition for your crimes, or in fear of meeting their puniſhment? Do thoſe tears acknowledge the juſtice of your doom, or only ſolicit mitigation of your ſufferings? I fear me, 'tis the latter."

She pauſed, but kept her eye ſtill fixed upon mine.

"Take courage," ſhe continued; "I wiſh not for your death, but your repentance. The draught which

I adminiſtered was no poiſon, but an opiate. My intention in deceiving you, was to make you feel the agonies of a guilty conſcience, had death overtaken you ſuddenly, while your crimes were ſtill unrepented. You have ſuffered thoſe agonies; I have brought you to be familiar with the ſharpneſs of death, and I truſt that your momentary anguiſh will prove to you an eternal benefit. It is not my deſign to deſtroy your immortal ſoul, or bid you ſeek the grave, burthened with the weight of ſins unexpiated. No, daughter, far from it; I will purify you with wholeſome chaſtiſement, and furniſh you with full leiſure for contrition and remorſe. Hear then my ſentence:—

"Though of late years unjuſtly neglected, and now oppoſed by many of our miſguided ſiſters (whom Heaven convert!), it is my intention to revive the laws of our order in their full force. That againſt incontinence is ſevere, but no more than ſo monſtrous an offence demands. Submit to it, daughter, without reſiſtance; you will find the benefit of patience and reſignation in a better life than this. Liſten then to the ſentence of St. Clare:—Beneath theſe vaults there exiſt priſons, intended to receive ſuch criminals as yourſelf: artfully is their entrance concealed, and ſhe who enters them muſt reſign all hopes of liberty. Thither muſt you now be conveyed. Food ſhall be ſupplied you, but not ſufficient for the indulgence of appetite: you ſhall have juſt enough to keep together body and ſoul, and its quality ſhall be the ſimpleſt and coarſeſt. Follow me."

Thunder-ſtruck at this barbarous decree, my little remaining ſtrength abandoned me. I anſwered only by falling at her feet, and bathing them with tears. The domina, unmoved by my affliction, roſe from her ſeat with a ſtately air: ſhe repeated her commands in an abſolute tone; but my exceſſive faintneſs made me unable to obey her. Mariana and Alix raiſed me from the ground, and carried me forwards in their arms. The prioreſs moved on, leaning on Violante, and Camilla preceded her with a torch. Thus paſſed our

ſad proceſſion along the paſſages, in ſilence only broken by my ſighs and groans. We ſtopped before the principal ſhrine of St. Clare. The ſtatue was removed from its pedeſtal, though how I knew not. The nuns afterwards raiſed an iron grate, till then concealed by the image, and let it fall on the other ſide with a loud craſh. The awful ſound, repeated by the vaults above and caverns below me, rouſed me from that deſpondent apathy in which I had been plunged. I looked before me; an abyſs preſented itſelf to my affrighted eyes, and a ſteep and narrow ſtair-caſe, whither my conductors were leading me. I ſhrieked, and ſtarted back. I implored compaſſion, rent the air with my cries, and ſummoned both heaven and earth to my aſſiſtance. In vain! I was hurried down the ſtair-caſe, and forced into one of the cells which lined the cavern's ſides.

My blood ran cold, as I gazed upon this melancholy abode. The cold vapours hovering in the air, the walls green with damp, the bed of ſtraw ſo forlorn and comfortleſs, the chain deſtined to bind me for ever to my priſon, and the reptiles of every deſcription, which, as the torches advanced towards them, I deſcried hurrying to their retreats, ſtruck my heart with terrors almoſt too exquiſite for nature to bear. Driven by deſpair to madneſs, I burſt ſuddenly from the nuns who held me; I threw myſelf upon my knees before the prioreſs, and beſought her mercy in the moſt paſſionate and frantic terms.

"If not on me," ſaid I, "look at leaſt with pity on that innocent being whoſe life is attached to mine! Great is my crime, but let not my child ſuffer for it! My baby has committed no fault. Oh! ſpare me for the ſake of my unborn offſpring, whom, ere it taſtes life, your ſeverity dooms to deſtruction!"

The prioreſs drew back haſtily; ſhe forced her habit from my graſp, as if my touch had been contagious.

"What!" ſhe exclaimed with an exaſperated air: "What! Dare you plead for the produce of your ſhame? Shall a creature be permitted to live, conceived

in guilt so monstrous? Abandoned woman, speak for it no more! Better that the wretch should perish than live: begotten in perjury, incontinence, and pollution, it cannot fail to prove a prodigy of vice. Hear me, thou guilty! Expect no mercy from me, either for yourself or brat. Rather pray that death may seize you before you produce it; or, if it must see light, that its eyes may immediatly be closed again for ever! No aid shall be given you in your labour; bring your offspring into the world yourself, feed it yourself, nurse it yourself; bury it yourself: God grant that the latter may happen soon, lest you receive comfort from the fruit of your iniquity!"

This inhuman speech, the threats which it contained, the dreadful sufferings foretold to me by the domina, and her prayers for my infant's death, on whom, though unborn, I already doted, were more than my exhausted frame could support. Uttering a deep groan, I fell senseless at the feet of my unrelenting enemy. I know not how long I remained in this situation: but I imagine that some time must have elapsed before my recovery, since it sufficed the prioress and her nuns to quit the cavern. When my senses returned, I found myself in silence and solitude. I heard not even the retiring foot-steps of my persecutors. All was hushed, and all was dreadful! I had been thrown upon the bed of straw. The heavy chain, which I had already eyed with terror, was wound around my waist, and fastened me to the wall. A lamp glimmering with dull melancholy rays through my dungeon, permitted my distinguishing all its horrors. It was separated from the cavern by a low and irregular wall of stone. A large chasm was left open in it, which formed the entrance, for door there was none. A leaden crucifix was in front of my straw couch. A tattered rug lay near me, as did also a chaplet of beads; and not far from me stood a pitcher of water, and a wicker-basket containing a small loaf, and a bottle of oil to supply my lamp.

My mental anguish, and the dreadful scenes in which I had been an actress, advanced the period of

my labour. In ſolitude and miſery, abandoned by all, unaſſiſted by art, uncomforted by friendſhip, with pangs which if witneſſed would have touched the hardeſt heart, was I delivered of my wretched burthen. It came alive into the world; but I knew not how to treat it, or by what means to preſerve its exiſtence. I could only bathe it with tears, warm it in my boſom, and offer up prayers for its ſafety. I was ſoon deprived of this mournful employment: the want of proper attendance, my ignorance how to nurſe it, the bitter cold of the dungeon, and the unwholeſome air which inflated its lungs, terminated my ſweet babe's ſhort and painful exiſtence. It expired in a few hours after its birth, and I witneſſed its death with agonies which beggar all deſcription.

But my grief was unavailing. My infant was no more; nor could all my ſighs impart to its little tender frame the breath of a moment. I rent my winding-ſheet, and wrapped in it my lovely child. I placed it on my boſom, its ſoft arm folded round my neck, and its pale cold cheek reſting upon mine. Thus did its lifeleſs limbs repoſe, while I covered it with kiſſes, talked to it, wept and moaned over it without remiſſion day or night.

Regularly once a day, Camilla brought me food. She ſought not to embitter my ſorrows with reproach. She bade me, 'tis true, reſign all hopes of liberty and worldly happineſs; but ſhe encouraged me to bear with patience my temporary diſtreſs, and adviſed me to draw comfort from religion. My ſituation evidently affected her more than ſhe ventured to expreſs; but ſhe believed that to extenuate my fault would make me leſs anxious to repent it. Often while her lips painted the enormity of my guilt in glaring colours, her eyes betrayed how ſenſible ſhe was to my ſufferings. In fact, I am certain that none of my tormentors (for the three other nuns entered my priſon occaſionally) were ſo much actuated by the ſpirit of oppreſſive cruelty, as by the idea that to afflict my body was the only way to preſerve my ſoul.

Once, and once only, the prioreſs viſited me in my dungeon. She then treated me with the moſt unrelenting cruelty. She loaded me with reproaches, taunted me with my frailty; and, when I implored her mercy, told me to aſk it of Heaven, ſince I deſerved none on earth. She even gazed upon my lifeleſs infant without emotion; and when ſhe left me, I heard her charge Camilla to increaſe the hardſhips of my captivity. Unfeeling woman! But let me check my reſentment. She has expiated her errors by her ſad and unexpected death. Peace be with her! and may her crimes be forgiven in heaven, as I forgive her my ſufferings on earth!

Thus did I drag on a miſerable exiſtence. Far from growing familiar with my priſon, I beheld it every moment with new horror. The cold ſeemed more piercing and bitter, the air more thick and peſtilential. My frame became weak, feveriſh, and emaciated. I was unable to riſe from the bed of ſtraw, and exerciſe my limbs in the narrow limits to which the length of my chain permitted me to move. Though exhauſted, faint, and weary, I trembled to profit by the approach of ſleep. My ſlumbers were conſtantly interrupted by ſome obnoxious inſect crawling over me. Sometimes I felt the bloated toad, hideous and pampered with the poiſonous vapours of the dungeon, dragging his loathſome length along my boſom. Sometimes the quick cold lizard rouſed me, leaving his ſlimy track upon my face, and entangling itſelf in the treſſes of my wild and matted hair. Often have I at waking found my fingers ringed with the long worms which bred in the corrupted fleſh of my infant. At ſuch times I ſhrieked with terror and diſguſt; and, while I ſhook off the reptile, trembled with all a woman's weakneſs.

Such was my ſituation when Camilla was ſuddenly taken ill. A dangerous fever, ſuppoſed to be infectious, confined her to her bed. Every one, except the lay ſiſter appointed to nurſe her, avoided her with caution, and feared to catch the diſeaſe. She was

perfectly delirious, and by no means capable of attending to me. The domina, and the nuns admitted to the myſtery, had latterly entirely given me over to Camilla's care. In conſequence, they buſied themſelves no more about me; and, occupied by preparing for the approaching feſtival, it is more than probable that I never once entered into their thoughts. Of the reaſon of Camilla's negligence, I have been informed ſince my releaſe by the Mother St. Urſula. At that time I was very far from ſuſpecting its cauſe. On the contrary, I waited for my gaoler's appearance at firſt with impatience, and afterwards with deſpair. One day paſſed away: another followed it: the third arrived. Still no Camilla! ſtill no food! I knew the lapſe of time by the waſting of my lamp, to repleniſh which, fortunately a week's ſupply of oil had been left me. I ſuppoſed, either that the nuns had forgotten me, or that the domina had ordered them to let me periſh. The latter idea ſeemed the moſt probable: yet ſo natural is the love of life, that I trembled to find it true. Though embittered by every ſpecies of miſery, my exiſtence was ſtill dear to me, and I dreaded to loſe it. Every ſucceeding minute proved to me that I muſt abandon all hopes of relief. I was become an abſolute ſkeleton: my eyes already failed me, and my limbs were beginning to ſtiffen. I could only expreſs my anguiſh, and the pangs of that hunger which gnawed my heart-ſtrings, by frequent groans, whoſe melancholy ſound the vaulted roof of the dungeon re-echoed. I reſigned myſelf to my fate: I already expected the moment of diſſolution, when my guardian angel—when my beloved brother arrived in time to ſave me. My ſight, grown dim and feeble, at firſt refuſed to recognize him: and when I did diſtinguiſh his features, the ſudden burſt of rapture was too much for me to bear. I was overpowered by the ſwell of joy at once more beholding a friend, and that a friend ſo dear to me. Nature could not ſupport my emotions, and took her refuge in inſenſibility.

Here Agnes ceaſed; and the Marquis replied to her addreſs in terms equally ſincere and affectionate. Lorenzo expreſſed his ſatisfaction at the proſpect of being ſo cloſely connected with a man for whom he had ever entertained the higheſt eſteem. The Pope's bull had fully and effectually releaſed Agnes from her religious engagements. The marriage was therefore celebrated as ſoon as the needful preparations had been made: for the Marquis wiſhed to have the ceremony performed with all poſſible ſplendour and publicity. This being over, and the bride having received the compliments of Madrid, ſhe departed with Don Raymond for his caſtle in Andaluſia. Lorenzo accompanied them, as did alſo the Marchioneſs de Villa Franca and her lovely daughter. It is needleſs to ſay that Theodore was of the party, and it would be it impoſſible to deſcribe his joy at his maſter's marriage.

The remaining years of Raymond and Agnes were happy as can be thoſe allotted to mortals, born to be the prey of grief, and ſport of diſappointment. The exquiſite ſorrows with which they had been afflicted, made them think lightly of every ſucceeding woe. They had felt the ſharpeſt darts in misfortune's quiver. Thoſe which remained, appeared blunt in compariſon. Having weathered fate's heavieſt ſtorms, they looked calmly upon its terrors: or, if ever they felt affliction's caſual gales, they ſeemed to them gentle as zephyrs which breathe over ſummer-ſeas.

FINIS.